HEAVEN UPON EARTH.

OR

The best Friend IN THE VVORST TIMES.

Being A

LEGACY TO LONDON.

J. J.

London, Printed in the Year 1665.

THE
REFACE.
TO
y Dearly Beloved in Christ, The CITIZENS of LONDON,
With all that bear a Good Will to that CITY.

THE Great and Dreadful God hath been pleading with poor *England* in these last Years, in such a manner as is scarce to be paralell'd in fore-going Ages: he hath left the Print of his Fingers behind him, and written Divine Displeasure in Letters of Blood. The Righteous Judge began his Circuit the last year in *London*, and in

that one City above One hundred thou-
ſand received the Sentence of Death from
his juſt Tribunal. He hath not yet ended
his diſmal Circuit, but he rideth ſtill from
one Shire to another, and doth not onely
keep his Aſſizes in one or two places in a
County, but he viſits moſt of their Market
Towns, and ſome ſmaller Villages alſo,
doing terrible things in Righteouſneſs a-
mongſt them. The wound was ſcarce heal-
ed in the City, the Plague not quite re-
moved, before another amazing Judge-
ment is ſent to ſucceed in the place of it.
God doth again break forth upon poor
London in greater fury ſtill, pleading his
cauſe with us in a lamentable Fire, which
in a few days ſpace, hath turned one of the
moſt Glorious Cities in the World to Aſhes.
The voice of the Sword was not heard,
the Language of the Plague was not un-
derſtood; wherefore the dreadful *Je-
hovah* ſpeaks louder and louder ſtill. He
hath now ſpoke as he did once from mount
Sinai, in Fire, Flames, and Smoak; and in
the thundring crackings of falling Houſes,
Churches, Halls, and ſtately Buildings; in
the howlings, ſkreekings, and doleful out-
cries of poor creatures, that were almoſt
at their wits end. He rode upon the wings
of the wind, he rode in a Chariot of fire

ning Fire; neither Bricks nor Stones can hinder his course, but the fury of the Lord drives over them all; at whose presence the Rocks are thrown down, and torn a pieces. The Bells did ring their own knells as they were tumbling; and its to be feared, were more melted at the anger of the mighty God, then thousands of hard-hearted men and women were: the Leads of the Churches were dissolved into showres, more easily by far, then stupid Professors that were wont to sit under them. That was a black cloud indeed which no wind could blow over, till it fell in such scalding drops! How few of those that were eating and drinking, and roaring but the day before, dreamed that such a Storm should rise before the morning, that would not be laid till it had turned such wicked inhabitants out of their seats, and made their houses a ruinous heap? I believe if they that were feasting on *Saturday*, had foreseen what would have come to pass in one weeks time, they would have had but little Stomach to their Dainties. Whereas if sinners would give any credit to the word of Truth, that doth more then once tell them, that when they are most secure, usually they are nearest the danger. The old World were as merry

ry and as jovial the day before the Flood, as if no evil were nigh them. The men of *Sodom* little thought when the Sun rose so gloriously in the morning upon them, that it would long before evening, be so dark a night with them. And though the world hear of these things a hundred times, yet they will not take warning, but they will be as jocund and chearful within a few weeks of Eternity, as though all were very well with them. But alas, alas poor Creatures! how miserably is the case altered with them, when they see their mistake in another world; then they will cry out that they had little cause to be so merry; and that tears and groans had much better become persons in their State then mirth and jollity. O that poor sinners would learn wisdom by fairer means! O that they might not be taught by Scorpions, Flames, and Burnings; when the merciful God is so loath to take such a severe course, if any thing less would do the work: but if sinners will persist in their obstinate Rebellions against God, and will not be reclaimed by lesser Judgements, they must expect a greater still; God will make the proudest, first or last, to bow or fall, to bend or break, to turn or burn. They which will not hear one Judgement, shall

before it be long feel another, for if the Sword can't be heard, the Plague shall; if neither the Sword nor the Plague, the Fire shall: if none of these, God hath his Three furies of wrath, and can Plague us yet seven times more for our sins. O stupid creatures that we are, when shall we hear the Rod and him that hath appointed it? What! do all these things come by chance? was there nothing of God in that Plague? not in these Flames? When was such a Fire heard of that was not kindled by the coals of his jealousie? I will not say but there was abundance of the policy and malice of Hell in this business, but I will affirm this, that had not our sins exceedingly kindled the wrath of God against us first, this deviliſh Popiſh Plot should have proved as Abortive as some of the former, had not our wickedness made our City more combustible then Briers and Thorns, the Jesuite should with more ease have fir'd the Season fire, and dried up the vast Ocean, or pull'd the Sun out of the Firmament, then have laid *London* in the dust. If there were nothing of God in this fire, why was it not as easily quenched as other Fires have been? what meant that unheard of stupidness that was upon the Spirits of the Magistrates? how came it to pass that the

most probable means to suppress its rage, should not be made use of? Whence came that great Wind that did like a pair of mighty bellows, give a double strength to those greedy Flames? Whence was it that there was such a general consternation of Spirit, that men should so forget their work, and run away, and leave the City to the mercy of the Fire? I might add a more significant token of Divine Retaliation than all these, but I wave that, because he that runs may read it. All the circumstances of this Fire speak aloud, Anger, Displeasure, Judgement.

Those three angry Heraulds, the *Blazing Stars* I mean, proclaimed War with *England*, from the just *Jehovah*, who would not put up such daring affronts as were offered him by the inhabitants of this Kingdom, without taking notice of them. If ever Gods dealings with a people speak any thing of displeasure, then those that *England* hath been exercised with, doe: All his dreadful Providences toward us do read their Commission; from a Holy, Just, and Angry God. But if all that hath been said speak nothing to the convincing of us, that God himself had the chief hand in these things; if they all seem but humane conjectures, I pray hear what God himself

speaks, *Amos* 3. 6. *Shall there be evil in a City, and God hath not done it?* The Lord takes it as a very great indignity, not to have the operation of his hands regarded; not to have his Judgements taken notice of, as coming from himself; and a hundred to one but they are near a second, who are not sensible of the first; and they near a third, who will not be warned by the first and second.

Our next enquiry shall be, wherefore God doth thus contend with us. Such Judgements as these are, never come only to try the people of Gods patience. Nay such great Judgements speak great Sins; and sometimes God writes the Sin in the forehead of the Punishment: will it not therefore be our great concern, to find out what may be the cause of this Fiery Displeasure. Truly we need not search long to find the cursed Traitour, that led the chief hand in this business. You are all ready to ask the same question which *Ahasuerus* did *Esther*, *Who is he, and where is he that durst presume in his heart to have any thing to do in so devilish a matter?* I answer as she did; *The Adversary and Enemy is thy wicked Heart.* Have you never read, *that wickedness burns like Fire?* Isa. 9. 18. That Sin which we make so much

of,

of, that Lust which we hug in our bosom, that *Delilah* which we do so oft imbrace, hath done us all this mischief: 'Tis sin that is the only procuring cause of Judgement. Holiness may set men against us: It's nothing but wickedness that can set God against us. Thine own wickedness, O *England* hath corrected thee, and thy own backslidings have reproved thee: *Know therefore and see, that it is an evil thing and bitter, that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God, and that my fear is not in thee, saith the Lord of hosts.* There is never a sinner in *England* but carrieth Wild-fire about with him to do a mischief with: The best natur'd unconverted man that lives, whatsoever fine name he may be called by, is no better then a mad-man, that casteth abroad Fire-brands, Arrows, and Death; and yet he saith that he means no harm, he is but in sport. O that foolish sinners should find out such dangerous things to play with! And such is his folly still, that when he hath set his Body, his Soul, his Relations, his Estate, his House, and his Neighbours too on fire; he makes a great outcry, Fire! Fire! Where did it begin? who was that careless Wretch by whose neglect it first came? Could there be such a barbarous unmerciful Monster on this

side

nde Hell that would do such a thing? Could any man living have the least hand in so hellish an act? Yes. How? being told that—— (I know not what to call him bad enough) that we may tare him in pieces, wee'l knock out his brains, wee'l send him to Hell, where he shall have Fire enough, if Fire be so good for him; a hundred deaths are too little for him: O that I had him here (saith the furious sinner) I would soon have the heart blood of him! Who now would imagine that a fellow that talks at this rate should be the man, that was head and heart deep in this fiery work? whereas if the man were thorowly searched, you might find abundance of sulphurous stuff about him; and if one should follow him from place to place, he might find that he seldom cometh into any place, but he leaveth some Brimstone, Gunpowder, and a lighted Match, in some secret corner behind him.

But general Accusations are no Accusations, wherefore I shall descend to a few particulars, and name some of those fiery sins, which, it's more then possible, have made poor *England* like Stubble and Tinder; and have turned our Capitol City into Ashes. And, O that all the Tribes of *Israel* would set themselves before the Lord,

Lord, and make a diligent enquiry after those accursed *Achans*, those God-provoking sins, which have been the troublers of *London*! O that we could resolve their death, though they be never so dear to us: My meaning is, O that upon the discovery of the sin that hath kindled the wrath of God, and caused him to break out upon us in such fiery indignation, we could in good earnest labour the mortifying of it, as we would endeavour to see Execution done upon the vilest Traitor in the world. What say you Citizens? will you promise that you will to the uttermost of your power, and with the strength of your souls oppose those sins which have done you so much wrong? and because you are weak, and they are mighty ones, will you call in the help of the Almighty against so wicked an Enemy? In hope of this I shall proceed in the search; and as I go along, as you would not have to do with Fire again, as you value your own eternal safety, riches, and peace; as you would not be harbourless when your house of clay shall be pulled down; as you desire to have a *house not made with hands*, and to live for ever in *the New Jerusalem*, be faithful in the examination of your own souls; and if you find them guilty, arraign, condemn, and cru-

crucifie that great Malefactour.

1. What do do you think of the fire of luſt and uncleanneſs? will not that burn Kingdoms, Countries and Cities, as well as the Bones, Marrow and Strength? *London* is not the firſt City that hath been turned into aſhes by that burning ſin. O how hath this ſin reigned in *London*! how many thouſands of *Solomons* ſtrange women were there, not in corners only, but in their Shops (as I may call them) whole Streets ſtanding in the Attire of Harlots; (I would to God my Informers were miſtaken.) It would make a Chriſtians heart ake to hear what Narratives ſome have made of theſe things, whoſe Profeſſion hath given them too clear Demonſtration of the truth of what they ſpake. How many of the Citizens Wives themſelves have given underſtanding modeſt perſons cauſe of ſuſpicion, that they have not been the leaſt guilty in this burning ſin? nay, how many of them which look very ſoberly, and go for Religious Perſons, have taken theſe coals into their boſoms? May not God juſtly take up the ſame complaint againſt ſome of the inhabitants of this City, as he did once againſt *Jeruſalem*; that *when he hath fed them to the full, they then committed adultery, and aſſembled themſelves together by troops*

troops in harlots houses; and that they were as fed horses in the morning; every one neighed after his neighbours wife. Shall I not visit for these things? Wherefore saith the Lord to his servant *Jeremiah*, *I will make my words in thy mouth fire, and this people wood, and it shall devour them*, Jer. 5. 7, 8, 9, 14. O that the hand of some of our Great Ones were not chief in this matter! O what dreadful daring sins of this nature have been done in the sight of the Sun! Have not some of our young *Absaloms*, even, as it were, spread their Tents to commit folly in the face of the whole City, as if Fornication alone were too little to sink them into Hell, except joyned with Sodomy and horrible Blasphemy; how have they added one to another? and then rejoyced, as if it were an honour to be a Devil incarnate, and an high piece of Gallantry to bid Defiance to the Almighty. Pass over the *Isles* of *Chittim* and see, go to *Kedar* and consider: was there ever greater sins in *Sodom*, or more prodigious wickedness heard of in *France* or *Italy*? not only Fornication but Adultery goes now for a venial fault, a *peccadillo*; and so impudent are some grown in their sin, that they make but a laughing business of such foul abominations

ons as these. O unspeakable madness! What! is there less danger in this sin now then there was in former times? Shall that wickedness which once ascended up to Heaven in a black cloud, and fell down again in showrs of Fire and Brimstone upon *Sodom* and *Gomorrah*, seem to us but vapours that will quickly vanish? Why should not the sin of uncleanness burn *London*, as well as the Cities of the plain? Is God less offended with sin then he was then? Is not God as holy, just, and powerful now as ever? Is his hand weaker now then ever? no such matter sinners; sin hath still its old nature; and if there be any difference its now of a deeper dye, as being committed against incomparably greater light. Wherefore deceive not your selves, if God condemned Whoremongers and Adulterers then, they are not like to be acquitted now, if they die in that sin; and let me add this, that that is a sin that is seldom truly repented of. O that those bruitish sinners would but seriously ponder these two or three Scriptures, *Heb.* 13.4. *Rev.*21.8. *Prov.*6.26. *Ephes.*5. 5, 6. *Jude v.*7.

2. What do you think of fiery Spirits, who if it lay in their power would turn all to ashes that are not as furious as themselves?

selves? How many are there in *England*, that would be glad with all their souls to be at this burning work again? We can't yet forget the *Marian days*, those black and dismal days, wherein it was an high crime to desire the light; wherein poor creatures must go hood-winked to Hell, or to Heaven in a flame. We can't let that *Powder-plot* slip out of our minds, though some of *Romes* friends could be contented that the memory of it should quite be quenched, and those Jesuitical Incendiaries should be received into our embraces. Nay, we can't but shrewdly suspect that that hellish *Cabal*, had their heads and hands, as well as their hearts in the fireing of *London*. These, these are the persons that have always traded much with Fire and Bloud; and we can scarce think that so many of them as were in *London*, have been altogether idle. Who is it that hath rent and torn us into so many pieces? Who is it that foments our divisions? he must be blind that sees not the hand of the Jesuite in all these. And are there none we call Protestants, that forget what Spirit it is which acteth them, while they are so implacable against those which they should love as brethren, and not spare to lay down their lives for them, if called to it.

O where

O where is the ſweet ſpirit that was amongſt Chriſtians in the Primitive Times? Did the commands of our great Maſter bind none but his Apoſtles and Diſciples? Did that Law of Love continue in force only for an Age or two? Doth it ſignifie nothing with us, that Chriſt did ſo highly commend this duty of *loving one another?* O *England*, *England*, when will thy bitter heart-burnings be cooled! I ſpeak to the hot Spirits of *England*. Do you think that he which condemned *James* and *John* when they would have been at this fiery work, will commend you for imitating of them? Is this forgiving of enemies? Is this praying for them that perſecute us? Is this bleſſing them that curſe us? What is that which we ſo earneſtly contend for? Is it the Faith once delivered to the Saints? Is it who ſhould love one another moſt? What is it that we labour ſo much for? is it to pluck firebrands out of the Fire? to quench the Flames of Hell that are ready to ſeize upon Chriſt-deſpiſing ſinners? When God hath ſent us into his vineyard to work, do not many of us play, or ſleep, or that which is worſe, make uſe of thoſe tools which God hath given us to work with, to fight withall, and to beat our fellow ſervants? If any be angry at what I

say, I must add this one word more to him; I am sure he is guilty. Let me in sober sadness expostulate the case with thee, before thou let flye too violently; let me ask this hot spirited fiery creature, Are you sure your Zeal is according to Knowledge? Are you certain the things you are so hot about are the weighty things of the Law? Are they as necessary as the Salvation of mens Souls? Are you sure they are the grand Fundamentals, without which it is impossible to escape everlasting Wrath? If so, I must confess I blame thee not: Dare you say that those that you are so fiery against, are all in a damnable state? If they were, they have the more need of your pity, and compassionate endeavours to convince them of their misery: but what if those which you so madly breath out threatnings against, be the children of God? I tell you, I would not be found guilty of *offending of one of those little ones* for all that you are worth, if it were ten thousand more then it is. Do you think that *their Father doth not see?* Or do you think that the God of Love, which hath made it your Duty to love your Children, hath none for his? Or do you hope to make your party good with him, and them too? If this be your mind, I know what will

become

become of the stoutest of you all shortly. Do you never look into the Bible, O ye fiery ones, which make nothing of smiting with the tongue? Did you never read the first Chapter of the second Epistle of *Paul* to the *Thessalonians*? There you may find what wages you shall have for such work, what recompence for such service. Who is it, that the Lord Jesus will give rest to? And who is that he will take vengeance of in flaming fire? When you intend next to trouble any of those that are dear to Christ, read and study that Chapter, and then as you like Fire and Flames go on in your Work. When you are inveighing against your Christian Brethren, then before you be too hot turn to *Jude* 14. *verse.* 1, 5. Remember that hard speeches shall be punished with no easie Judgement. Consider how the Great Indictment runs, *Matth.* 25. It may be you may think that as to the main thing, *Religion*, you are safe enough; but did you never hear that its more then possible that such a ones Religion is but a seeming vain Religion, who bridles not his tongue, *Jam.* 1. 26. What do you say to these Scriptures, O ye hot ones! do you well consider what Fire warms you? and what Furnace those coals must glow in for ever? Your fiery tongues

will shortly be scorched in such Flames, as that they will roar out for a drop of water to cool them. *What shall be given unto thee, or what shall be done unto thee, thou false tongue? Sharp Arrows of the mighty, with coals of Juniper.* O when shall these unnatural heats be abated! I speak all this to violent ones of all Perswasions soever: And I say again, I am sure none but the guilty will be offended; but I fear the Fire burns on every side so terribly, that these few drops will do little to the quenching of it; but however, who can choose but draw water that knows what precious things are near the burning? Who can forbear pulling away some of the fuel, that understands how dreadful the Fire may be if it burn a while longer. I am the larger upon this, because this great sin hath already been burning many years; and hath miserably weakened us, and is now of more dangerous consequence then ever. Is it not enough, *England*, that thou art compassed about with Flames, but that thou must be still kindling Fires, gathering Fuel, and blowing it up, and that even in thy own bowels? Is this a time for Englishmen, for Christians, for Protestants to be ready to tear one anothers throats out? Wo is me that I dwell among men that are

set on Fire! *Woe is me that I sojourn in Mesech, that I dwell in the tents of Kedar! my soul hath long dwelt with them that hate peace. I am for peace, but when I speak, they are for war.* Psal. 120. Shall nothing make us lay aside our unnatural feuds? Wo, wo to those which are so far from quenching this Fire, that they still labour to make it burn more furiously: it may be that Fire which now warms them, may one day burn them. This fiery sin also hath not had the least hand in burning *London* to Ashes. And what sayest thou, O sinner, to this Indictment, Guilty, or not guilty? *O blessed are the meek!* but if thou art guilty, run speedily to the great Conduit, the Fountain, and fill thy bucket, & pour, pour abundance of water upon this Fire; nay, upon the very Smoak: thou little thinkest what it will else come to at last.

3. Hath there not been a strange coldness and indifferency in the things of God, and since Preaching would not warm us, God will try whether the Fire will: While we heard of the unsearchable riches of Christ, which should have thawed our hearts, and turned them into a flame of love, we were as cold and as lifeless as if the tenders of a Christ to the lost Sons of *Adam* were no such great mercy, and the Gospel

Gospel of Reconciliation but an Incensible-rable kindness. While we heard the sons of Thunder, our souls were not rent; while the flames of Hell have been set forth warmly, we have been as little affected as if the fire of that burning Pit, were but a painted Fire, and the torments of the damned a politick Fable to feare men into civility. While we have heard of the day of judgement so oft, and have not seen it, we are almost of the mind, that things will always be as they are; and are ready to think, that because God staves long, therefore he will never come. But hold there sinner, that would be good news indeed to thee; but flatter not your selves so; God will ere long convince you by an undeniable Argument, that Heaven, Hell, and Eternity are the greatest Realities in the world; and that Gods Judgement and Damnation are not things to be jested with. Some of us have been ready to talk in our hearts, as those *Atheists* did with their tongues, *Isa.* 5. 19. *Let him make speed and hasten his work, that we may see it.* And now God hath answered that request with a vengeance. Faith would not see, and therefore Sence shall. God hath let the sins of *London* see a little Emblem of the Day of Judgement; He came like a

thief

thief in the night, he came irresistibly and dreadfully, and in a little space hath despoiled us of our glory, and filled our hearts with horrour, and our souls with astonishment; and if we continue still our old *lukewarmness*, we may be visited with new *beating judgements* still. But some will say, what do I mean to reckon this amongst the God-provoking sins? When was there ever more praying? When more of the outward acts of Religion? What Fasting? How many Solemn Assemblies?

Did not *Israel* and *Judah* do as much as we, think you, when God laid their Country desolate, and burnt their Cities with Fire, and scourged them with one judgement after another, till he was ready to throw away his Rod, and give them up as utterly incorrigible? Read but the first Chapter of *Isaiah*, and you shall find that at that very time they made as glorious a Profession of Religion as any people in the world. They lifted up their hands with a great deal of seeming Devotion, they made many Prayers, and they hung down their heads for a while like Bull-rushes, and as to the external part of Religion seemed to be a people that delighted God: and yet you see how exceedingly the Lord undervalued all that they did.

Why,

Why, what was the matter that the Lord takes no more notice of them, then if they were the vileſt wretches on this ſide Hell, and calls them by a name which ſpoke no leſs, *Men of Sodom, and inhabitants of Gomorrah*. Why, the reaſon was, becauſe they play'd the Hypocrites ſo abominably; while their tongues were as hot as could be, their hearts were as cold as ſtones; while they ſacrificed the beaſt to God, they devoted their life and love to their luſts; and the ſum of all their Religion was, to tell God they were ſinners, and to deſire that he would give them leave to be ſo ſtill, and after they had ſinned as long as they could, beſtow a happineſs and glory upon them in another world; that God would be pleaſed to accept the Shell, and let the Devil have the Kernel. And how can you think ſuch Petitions as theſe could be well accepted of? Oh that *England* were not as like them in ſin as it is in ſuffering! O that we did not give our God as juſt cauſe to complain of us as he did of them! We cry out as they did, *The Temple of the Lord, the Temple of the Lord*: We boaſt of our Church, of our Baptiſm, and this is all that the moſt of us have to diſtinguiſh us from Pagans and Infidels. O where, where are the men and women to be found, whoſe

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Professions and Actions correspond? how few are there that know what it is to worship God in Spirit and in Truth? Nay, is not Godliness and *Saint* become a word of contempt and scorn? Doth not he that departs from iniquity make himself a prey? and yet we must go for the most unquestionable Christians. If this be Religion, what is irreligious? If this be Holiness, what is Wickedness? Should not the Lord visit for such things as this? and if God should not be avenged on such a people as this, they would be confirmed in their wickedness, and think that Holiness it self approved of the greatest impieties. The truth of it is, considering all things, it is a miracle that our condition is not far sadder then it is; It is a wonder that our Fire was not mingled with Brimstone, Pride, idleness, and fulness of bread, were the sins of *Sodom*, and was *London* less guilty? may we not add oppression, falsness, perjury, prodigious insensibility of former Judgements? The Plague which fell chiefly upon the poor, began to be thought nothing by the rich, who most of them flew from it; and some of them were as merry in the Country, as if *London* ailed nothing: but now they also shall feel what it is to lye under the scourge: and they that would not abate

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anything of their pride and luxury to keep others from starving, shall do it now whether they will or not, to keep themselves from it. They which would give but little to supply the exigences of others when they had it, shall now have but little to supply their own. I tell you some of the faithful Ministers that staid in the City, when they beheld the bruitish stupidness of the generality of people, much feared another Judgement upon the neck of the Plague. Was there not one more especially who declared himself thus in publick? *O London, London! if thou dost not repent, and reform in another kind of manner then hitherto yet done, if God doth not speedily send another great and visible Judgement upon thee, then the Lord hath not spoken this day by me.* O London, London! said another, *O that thou hadst known in this thy day the things of thy peace!* I tremble, said another, (who is now in his Chamber hid till the indignation be overpast) *to see what a storm is ready to fall upon our miserable rich ones, who are now feasting and faring deliciously every day in the Country, while we are ready to famish some of us, and dying by thousands in the City.* So that we cannot say but that we had fair warning. Should I go on still to read Gods Indict-

ment

mene against us, when should I have done? O where is that sweet Spirit that was once stirring in *London*! Is not Religion in the life of it almost out of fashion? Is it not laid aside as a garb not becoming our present times? but I believe before God hath done with us he will make us put it on again, as well as our old cast away suits: O how have we forsaken our first Love! O the dreadful Apostacy of some of our hearts! O how little have those of us that should have encouraged Holiness troubled our selves with it, except to suppress, browbeat and oppose it. Hath it not been a sport to some in this City, to abuse the holy Scriptures, and those that desired to go to Heaven by that light. Who have been the song of the Drunkard? What have the profane Wits made the great Subject of of their scurrilous Tongues, but Sacred Things? as if it were the greatest credit to dishonour our Maker, and true courage to despise the Laws and power of an Almighty God. At what a high rate do the Devils Champions act, as if they were afraid they could never do their Master service enough, and after all should miss of his Company for ever. But never fear that sinner; Hell may be had at a great deal cheaper rate. If you desire to be so

familiar

familiar with Gods Judgement, Damning, and the Devil, it may be sooner then you are aware you may have enough of them. Neither have we cause to censure the Laity alone, as only guilty in these fiery sins: The ruines of the Churches, and the burning of the Pulpits, speak those which claim the greatest interest in both, not to be altogether innocent. Give me leave to lay my self and you in the dust, O ye Ministers of *England*. Have we been indeed true and faithful to the interest of Christ and Souls? Have we not minded the Fleece as much as the Flock? Have we taught the word in season and out of season? Have we been in travail to see Christ formed in the souls of our Hearers; Have we besought sinners in Christs stead to be reconciled to God? Have we watched over souls? Have we warned sinners night and day with tears? Have we taught them publickly, and from house to house? Have we been like burning and shining lights? Hath the honour of our great Master been our greatest design? Have we laboured hard in Gods vineyard, and in good earnest prayed that God would send more labourers into his harvest? Have we preached by holy Lives and sound Doctrine? This 'tis to be a Gospel-Minister. But hath this

this indeed been the practice of the Ministers of *England*? Have we not rather given *Campian* and his brethren the Jesuites cause to insult and say, *Nihil eorum ministris vilius?* Have not abundance of us by our vile and abominable lives exposed the Sacred Function, and caused the offerings of the Lord to be abhorred? Have not our Actions spoke more for the Devil, then our Tongues have done for Christ? Do not the common people begin almost to question our Office, and look upon it as a Cheat? Are not they far more hardned by our wicked, or unprofitable conversation, then softned by our preaching? preaching did I say? perhaps I might have put in another word; for that was a work that some of us troubled our selves little enough with. And it's observed by some, that we left our Pulpits and made them almost useless, before God burnt them: and when we did preach, did we preach Christ, or our selves. The Moralist (*Epic.*) thought it a ridiculous thing to call two thousand people together, to tell them that he was a good Scholar, in a *Periphrasis* of two hours long; he tells us (though a Heathen) *That it was God and Souls that he was to speak for, and not himself.* And shall a Christian Minister, judge it greater wis-

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dom) wittily to commend himself, then warily to commend Christ. *Pudet hæc opprobria nobis vel dici potuisse, & non potuisse refelli.*

I expect that those which are most guilty should least relish this accusation; but let me tell such, they have already more disgraced themselves by acting, then I dare by speaking; and as for those that are not guilty, all this is nothing to them. These are no secret things, but such as the world rings of; and confession of sin, and humiliation for them, and reforming of them, will be a surer guard to our credit then our hiding them. I may say, shall we be so tender in the matter of our honour, and shall not Gods be at all vindicated? And if I may not censure others, I hope you will give me leave to accuse my self: and for my part I had far rather judge my self here, then be judged hereafter.

Well now, Is *England* guilty or not guilty? Is not *London* tried and cast? And shall we not yet humble our selves, and give glory to the God of *Israel*? Shall we still like *Pharaoh* harden our hearts against all these plagues? O that we may be wise at last! that before it be too late, we may *know the things of our peace*! O that we may come refined and purified out of this Fire! O

that

that it may purge away our dross, and take away our Tin! O that like burnt children we may for ever after dread the fire! O that those dreadful things which we have seen and heard, may engage us more deeply against sin, which brought them all upon us! And let me tell you, this is nothing to the mischief that sin intends to do us if we look no better after it. O shall we easily be reconciled to that which hath robbed us of so many of our sweetest enjoyments, that hath spoiled us of our goods; which hath turned us out of our houses, but with little warning, and given them to our servant, who will never restore them again, I mean the Fire. Shall we lodge that in our bosom which hath turned our beloved and beautiful City into Ashes? Shall we look upon that as no enemy, which hath done us such a great deal of harm? Shall we again joyn in Affinity with that Prince of Darkness, who first or last undoes all that have any thing to do with him, except to resist him. Shall the wrongs that this old Adversary hath done to poor *London* be revenged by a new Covenant with him? Is it a small injury to dismantle, rifle and burn such a City as *London* was? O that one Fire might kindle another! O that our Souls were inflamed with indignation against

against sin! When Satan sollicits you next to folly, then think of *Eden*, *London* and *Golgotha*; I mean the injuries that sin did you in all those places. Let me a little incense your souls against that enemy that we are ready so soon to receive into favour. Was it not this enemy which ran without pity the last year from one end of the City to the other, and left in most of our houses one dead, in some scarce one living? It was this which fed the greedy Grave with some hundreds at a meal. This, this tore out dear and precious Relations out of our embraces; and shall we still have as much kindness for it as for the dearest friend in the world? I wonder how sin & Satan came to deserve so well at our hands, that we should prefer them both above all that we have in the world! O how hath the Devil bewitched poor sinners, that they should rather part with their greatest friends, then the least sin! What good did Satan ever do us, that we should make so much of his brats! O desperate madness! O prodigious folly, that men and women should value sin above their nearest Relations, above their Souls, their God! O that sinners would believe once that sin is none of their friend, for all they are so well acquainted with it. 'Tis this which laid our glorious

flaring City

City in the dust. This is that great Robber (for all he speaks us so fair) that hath made us poorer by some millions then we were three weeks ago; and shall we for all that let him go away without revenge? O that I could prejudice all the sinners in *London* against sin; O that they may hate it with a perfect hatred, and then I believe none of them would complain of their loss. Come and see what Desolations, what dreadful havock it hath made among our stately buildings! How are they become a ruinous heap! How are those brave and magnificent Structures, the Gifts of our Noble Ancestors, levell'd with the ground! Where is our *Royal Exchange*? What is become of most of our Halls and Churches? How sad a spectacle is it now to look upon *Lombard-street*, *Cheapside*, and *Pater-Nosters-Row*? How ghostly a sight is it to see the place where *London* stood! Of all that glory, how little is left! What can we find but a few bricks, smoaking Cellars, and a heap of rubbish? *How doth the City sit solitary that was full of people, she that was great among the Nations, and Princess among the people, how is she become poor!* From the Daughter of *London* all her beauty is departed. *London* remembred in the day of affliction and of her misery, all her pleasant

thidge that she had in the days of old? When her daughters were clothed like Ladies, and her Citizens were like so many Princes. But what an alteration hath sin made! What—— let sighs and groans speak the rest. O *let it not be told in* Gath, *let it not be published in the streets of* Askelon! Let it not be spoke in *Holland*; let not this be reported in *France*! Triumph not O *Spain*! Rejoyce not O *Italy*! *The cup shall pass over unto* Edom, *and* Babylon *shall drink the dregs of it.* Shall *London* be brought to the dust, and shall *Rome* sit as a Lady for ever? *Tremble, O Babylon, tremble, for thy day is coming. The day of the Lord will be terrible, it will burn like Fire. If judgement begin at the house of God, where shall the wicked and ungodly appear? Rejoyce not against me, O my enemy, though I fall, I shall rise again*; but when *Babylon* falls, she shall fall with a vengeance, like a milstone in the mighty waters. Thy turn, O *Rome*, is coming. When thou heardst of the desolations of *London*, thou skippedst for joy; thou sittest and thinkest thy self safe, and dost not fear but that thy glory shall run paralel with the being of the world, thou shalt be a Queen for ever. But doth God say so too? No; thy plagues shall come in a moment, and thy desolation

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on like a whirlwind: *Ere long the Kings of the earth shall hate the whore, and tear her flesh in pieces, and burn her with fire. Hath the Lord stretched out upon Zion the line of confusion, and the stones of emptiness, and shall thou go altogether unpunished? Come near O ye Nations, and hearken O ye people, let the earth hear, and all that is therein, the world, and all things that come forth out of it; for the indignation of the Lord shall be upon all Nations, and his fury upon all their Armies; he shall vterly destroy them, and their slain shall be cast out, and their stink shall come up out of their carcases; and the mountains shall be melted with their bloud; for the sword of the Lord shall be bathed in bloud, it shall come down upon Idumea, and upon the people of my curse, to judgement; for the day of the Lords vengeance is coming, and the year of recompences for the controversie of Zion, and the streams thereof shall be turned into pitch, and the dust thereof into brimstone: and the land thereof shall become burning pitch, it shall not be quenched night nor day.* This shall be the condition of the Adversaries of *Zion*, and their breach shall never be made up; but the Lord will heal the breaches of *Zion*, and build up her wasts, and she shall be inhabited, and shine in her glory, &c.

turn to him that hath torn her, he will heal her.

Come therefore, let us search and try our ways, and turn again unto the Lord. We will bear the indignation of the Lord, because we have sinned against him: *We will take with us words, and go unto our God and say, Heal our back-slidings and love us freely.* It is time for *London* to fall down before the mighty *Jehovah*, to humble thy self, and to lick the very dust. Thus saith the Lord to the inhabitants of *London*, *Seek ye me, and ye shall live; but seek not* Bethel, *nor enter into* Gilgal, *and pass not over to* Beersheba. Take heed of Idolatry, take heed of unscriptural Worship; the Ark and *Dagon* can't dwell long together. *Gilgal shall surely go into captivity, and* Bethel *shall come to nought.* O let *England* have a care of Idolatry, that people-wasting and City-burning sin. Take heed of Popery: stick to the Scripture as you value your souls. It may be I may not have much less cause to renew my advice then the Prophet had, wherefore I say again, *Have a care of* Gilgal, Bethel *and* Beersheba. *Seek ye the* Lord, *and ye shall live, least he break out like fire in the house of* Joseph, *and devour it, and there be none to quench it in* Bethel, *Amos* 5. 4, 5, 6. Awake O

London,

London and repent quickly, for yet there is hopes! repent in good earnest, and thy God will yet look upon thee, and raise thee out of the dust, and take thee off from the dunghill, and thy glory shall be double to what it was. *The Lord will lay thy stones with fair colours, he will lay thy foundations with Saphires, he will make thy windows of Agates, and thy gates of Carbuncles, and all thy borders of pleasant stones; in righteousness shalt thou be established, thou shalt be far from oppression, for thou shalt not fear, and from terrour, for it shall not come near thee.* Cry, cry mightily unto the Lord, ye that make mention of his name, and give him no rest till he establish the glory of *England*, and make *London* a praise in the whole earth: for *Londons* sake I will not be silent, for our *Zions* sake I will not hold my peace: the place of the Sepulchres of my Fathers lies waste, the place of my Nativity, the Sanctuary and shelter of Gods people lies desolate. The City wherein sometimes dwelt righteousness, is fallen to the ground! *London* is in Ashes! Christians, how can you bear such a sight without tears! This is the place where your souls were sometimes fed with marrow and fatness; Here thousands and thousands were born to God. Christians, can you forget

the place of your Spiritual Nativity? Here you enjoyed sweet Communion with the Saints. For your brethren and kindred sake, let *London* lie near your hearts. O pray, pray, pray for poor desolate *London*! they shall prosper that love her. Remember *London*. O ye praying Ones! You Favourites of Heaven, when you are in the Kings presence, speak a good word for dear *London*! Remember her in your Fasts, forget her not in all your Addresses to God, but wrestle with him for a blessing for her. O let us fall to Fasting, Prayer, and Reformation from *Dan* to *Beersheba*! Let us buckle to our work in sober sadness. I promise you *Englishmen*, it's now no time for to be jesting; Our glory is departed! The Fire of the Lord is burning on every side. Come, bring your buckets, fill them with tears: O that mine eyes were waters, and my head a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night over thee, O *London*. Hear O ye that are afar off, listen to the groans of *London*! Do you not hear her crying out as a woman in travail? Wherefore do I see palenels upon all faces? Is there not a cause? Come let us gird sackcloth upon our loyns, and cast ashes upon our heads for *London's* calamity; and if men and women can't speak, asses,

double,

double-burnt bricks, and that dunghill of sin where *London* stood, open its mouth wide, and cryes, *Have pity upon me, O ye my friends, have pity upon me, for the hand of the Lord hath touched me*; Is it nothing to you, O ye that dwell in the Countries? Come up to *London* and see, and let your eyes affect your hearts. Behold, how many disconsolate creatures walk up and down upon the rubbish of *London*. Come and see what desolation the Lord hath made: how dreadful hath his displeasure shewed it self, upon some that are better then your selves! Consider how many thousands of suffering Families there be which were sometimes able, and some of them willing to relieve others in such a state. Behold the Merchants and Citizens of *London*, like persons amazed, struck thorow with horrour, and filled with perplexity; and if you have any thing of a Christian in you, let it now be seen: let your heart and your purse too be opened wide; and go home and mourn over that calamitous place, and weep for their sins which had a hand in bringing that misery upon them. Stir up others to pity them: tell them what a sad sight your eyes have seen, and labour to make them and your heart more sensible of their sufferings. I

may say of them too: Can the head be deadly sick, and the rest of the body very well? I believe the country will quickly feel the sad effects of *London* poverty. Go home therefore and pour out your souls before God, and let your eyes run down with tears: Let *Englands* mourning be like the mourning of *Hadadrimmon* in the valley of *Megiddo*. Pity poor *London*, O ye Nobles and Gentry of *England*. This is not a time for an Englishman, for a Christian, to be hoarding up Treasure in, except it be on the backs and bellies of Christians: this is no time to be drinking Wine in bowls, to be slaying of Oxen and killing of Sheep: this is no season to fare as *Dives* did, except you will be content with his reckoning. If therefore you have any bowels, any compassion, contract all your superfluous expences for more noble uses. Act for the Lords sake as men that are not void of humanity, and as those that might have been, and may be in a suffering condition before you die. Let not your Charity begin and end too at home. Let not your Charity be cold after such a Fire, lest your turn be next to know what Fire is. Consider for Christs sake, and for your own sakes too, whether be more necessary, the pampering of Horses, the feeding of Hounds,

Hounds, or the relieving of distressed Chri-
stians? which do you think you shall reflect
upon with most comfort, when you come
to die? Which do you believe will be the
best account at the day of Judgement, when
God shall ask you how you spent your
Estates? to say, I spent so many hundreds
by the year in sumptuous house-keeping,
so much upon idle unnecessary Attendants;
so much at Cards and Dice, so much upon
Playes and Whores, so much given to make
men drunk, and so much at the Tavern;
Or so many hundreds for the feeding and
clothing of Gods poor; so many hundreds
for a stock to set up diligent young men,
that were undone by the Fire; so much for
the present relief of those that were
brought into pressing Exigencies by that
calamitous Flame, and such like uses?
Which of these do you think will be the
most Comfortable Account at the day of
Judgement? Remember that those that
will not shew Mercy at such a time, shall
have Judgement without Mercy. Your
sin helped to lay *London* waste: O that I
could be as confident that your Charity
and Reformation would help to build it
again! O that you may have as great a
hand in its Reparation, as you had in its
Devastation! But I say again, if the groans

of

of London be not heard by you, if her calamities do not affect you, know this, that the day is coming when you shall cry, and not be heard, when you shall groan and not be pitied.

O let not me rejoyce till I see thy glory, O *England*, returning. *London* shall never be forgotten by me while my breath laseth. The servants of God favour the very dust of our *Jerusalem*. Once more Christians let me with all earnestness beseak your help. Help all you that love *London*, that love God, that love your Souls, help with your tears and prayers, help with your hands, hearts, and purses: it may be the Lord will be gracious to us, and cause his face to shine upon us, and then we shall be saved. I say again, and let all that wish well to poor *England* say so too, let us gird us with sackcloth, and cast ashes upon our heads, and cry mightily unto the Lord for her that sits in the dust. Proclaim a Fast, call a Solemn Assembly, gather the people together, sanctifie the Congregation, gather the children, and those that suck the breasts, let the Bridegroom go forth out of his Chamber, and the Bride out of her Closet; let the Ministers of the Lord weep bitterly between the Porch and the Altar, and let them say, *Spare thy people, O Lord,*

and

wherefore should our enemies say, Where is their God? Then will the Lord be jealous for his land, and pity his people; yea, the Lord will answer and say unto London, I will raise thy waste places again, and I will build thy streets, and the voice of joy and gladness shall be again heard in thee, yea, the voice of praise and thanksgiving; I will send you Corn, Wine and Oyl, and thou shalt be satisfied therewith. I will restore the Riches to thee, which the Fire hath taken from thee. I will send peace into your walls, and prosperity into your borders; I will restore your Teachers which are removed into corners; I will send the Gospel of peace in its power and purity among you; I will write Holiness to the Lord upon the foundations of your houses, upon your gates and palaces; your riches, trade and glory shall return unto you; and you shall be blessed and your posterity after you; But if you will run do wickedly, and will not repent, I do here declare, that all these are but the beginnings of sorrows; for all this the anger of the Lord shall not be turned away, but his hand shall be stretched out still; and he will yet plague you seven times more for your sins: and your God will be a consuming Fire, which

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will again break out and devour what you have saved out of these flames; & through the wrath of the Lord of hosts the whole land shall be darkness, and the people shall be as the fewel of Fire, and no man shall spare his brother, and he shall snatch on the right hand and be hungry, and he shall eat on the left hand, and not be satisfied; they shall eat every one the flesh of his own arm. *Manasseh* shall be against *Ephraim*, and *Ephraim* against *Manasseh*, and both of them against *Judah*. For all this his anger will not be turned away, but his hand is stretched out still. Wherefore, repent, O *London*, of thy abominable uncleanness and pride; repent of thy backsliding and idolatry; repent of thy perjury, lying and cheating; repent of thy lukewarmness and hypocrisie; repent of thy covetousness, worldlymindedness and cruelty; repent of thy gluttony and drunkenness. Ye Daughters of *London* which were haughty, and walked with stretched-forth necks, and wanton eyes, walking and mincing as ye went, the Lord hath taken away much of the bravery of your tinkling Ornaments, of your changeable Suits of Apparel, your Mantles and Glasses, Fine Linnen, Hoods, and Vails, he hath stained the glory of your Pride; and will you again

be as foolish as ever? Will you never understand your sin till God hath burnt the rest of your fine things and you too? O yes Citizens of *London*, hath not God written vanity upon your greatest enjoyments? Have not your riches taken themselves wings and flown away? and will you again after all this set your hearts upon such short-lived uncertain riches, and undervalue those true and everlasting riches. O look upon the world as it is, as an empty, dissatisfying, transitory thing, and too mean a match for a soul. Is it not now high time to look after a house that can't be burnt, *a house not made with hands, which is eternal with God in the Heavens*? Is it not now high time to get into that City which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God? Will it not now be for our interest to look after our freedom in that *New Jerusalem*? There we may have a dwelling more safe then a house of brick or hewen stone, which a greater Fire then this was, can't demolish or impair.

But if any be so hardned and incorrigible, as to make a pish of all this, I come to such with dreadful tidings ere long; O stupid sinner, thou shalt behold a far more dismal Fire, and hear far more lamentable outcries, & see thousands of thousands at their wits ends,

ends, filled with unspeakable horrour and perplexity, not being able to save the least rag to cover their nakedness, nor to save themselves from those dreadful Flames; and if thou repent not speedily, thou shalt be one of them; and thou also shalt wish thou mightest be so happy as to be covered with the ruins, or consumed to nothing with the Flames; thou shalt call and cry to the rocks to cover thee, and to the mountains to hide thee from that terrible sight, the Lord Christ the Judge, whose eyes are like flaming Fire. Beloved, the day of the Lord is coming which shall burn like Fire, in which not Houses and Cities only, but Lands also, yea, the whole world shall be all in a Flame, Heaven and Earth will be on a Fire; that will be a Fire indeed! Let your losses be never so great now, I am sure if you do not repent, they will be infinitely greater then. Those three nights were sad nights wherein you could not take a wink of sleep for the Fire; but that will be a far sadder night, which will never have a day following it, in which you can't be able to take a moments rest for those intolerable Flames. You will then think the burning of your houses nothing to the burning of your bodies; and the burning of your bodies nothing to the

torments

portions of your souls. I tell thee, O sinner, if thou continuest an enemy to God, God hath not done with thee yet, the worst is still to come. Upon the wicked he will rain Fire and Brimstone, and an horrible tempest; and this shall be the portion of their cup; and the wicked shall be turned into Hell, and cast into that lake that burns for ever and ever: a Fire that shall never, never, never be quenched. O that's a terrible Fire which shall not burn four days, nor four years, nor four thousand, nor four millions, nor four millions of millions (O happy were it for sinners if it might at last be quenched, though it lasted never so long) but it shall burn for ever, for ever, for ever! O that will be a dismal day when that Fire begins to break out! when the sinners in *Zion* shall be afraid, and the hypocrites shall be surprized! Who among us shall dwell with devouring Fire? Who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings? I tremble O sinners of *England*, tremble ye sinners of *London*, lest those unquenchable Flames seize upon you, which are infinitely more dreadful then those which your eyes have seen with abundance of terrour. That's a Fire which shall be felt more then seen: the Lord deliver poor *London* from that Fire,

and

and then we shall the more patiently bear that. O that some of them which have saved most of their goods out of this Fire, may not lose them all, and their souls too in that! O happy would it be if this Fire should put us all into such a fright that we may be afraid of Fire ever after! I mean of the Fire of sin, of the Fire of Gods wrath, of the Fire of Hell. But let me add a word or two more to them which have been great loosers by this dreadful Fire. Remember that you have that within you which kindled this great Flame, be as careful to quench that Fire within you, as you were to quench that without you, and more too: fear sin more then Fire, more then Hell, and then neither of them shall do you any hurt. And again, I say, speedily make sure of such a house, such goods, such an estate which is not subject to such hazards. And now many of you are turned out of your habitations, and have lost a great part of that little which you had, and are out of a great deal of your employments, whereby you might again stand upon your legs; I must tell you among other losses, I believe some of you have lost your friends too. Most of them which in your prosperity seemed much to respect you, will in your adversity forget your

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acquaintance. Perhaps by this time ſome of you have experienced that a true friend is a greater rarity then you thought it was, and that among all your acquaintance (if you be very poor) you can ſcarce go to one that will receive you and yours, and make himſelf a ſharer in your ſufferings, and you a ſharer with him in his comforts. You might be welcome while you had a free trade and good comings in, but now their houſes are too ſtraight, and they are ſorry that they cannot accommodate you, and with ſome ſuch poor excuſes you are ſhaken off; or if they do receive you for a while, they are quickly ſick of your company, and you ſhall ſoon perceive that their countenance is not towards you as formerly. But ſuppoſe, which I believe too few will find, that ſome friend will do all that I ſpeak of; yet where is there ſuch a friend that will not onely ſupply your preſent exigencies, but alſo make up your paſt loſſes, and make abundant proviſion for you, for the future againſt all manner of wants? ſuch a friend as this I may confidently ſay you ſhall rarely find. But now my errand to you is to bring you tidings of ſuch a friend; One that (if you will be quiet, and let him alone to do with you as he pleaſeth) will make you a far greater

go into them a loser by this Fire. *Acquaint now thy self with him, and be at peace; and thereby good shall come unto thee.* Get but acquaintance with God, and he will provide you a convenient House, he will lay you in the best Wares, and that without money and without price, he will make you to forget your Losses, and you shall drive a better Trade then ever you did in your lives; and you shall say, that as for your part, it is well that you were thus undone. Your incomes shall be far greater, your returns quick and surer, your state shall be as much altered for the better, as *Jobs* was at his latter end. Now, if ever, it is seasonable looking out for such a friend. He alone is *The best friend in the worst times.* He knows *Job* upon the dunghill as well as *David* upon the Throne. He will be most kind when others are like to be most unkind. He will visit you when others will scarce look upon you. In his house you shall be as welcome as ever; in his house are many mansions; if it were not so, he would have told you. In his City there is room enough, and you shall have entertainment there, and be more welcome then if you staid away; his doors will be open to them which have no houses to hide their heads in. Come to him, ye har-

bourlels ones, he invites you earnestly and heartily, and he will give you better. You that have no friends, or but sorry ones, come to him now in your straights, and he will never cast your poverty or his kindness in your teeth, except your carriage be proud and unbecoming your state: but let me tell you this for your comfort, that if you do once come to him, he will in no wise cast you out again; once your friend, and so for ever. Now, now is the time that such a friend would be worth the having: This is a friend indeed. Now is the time, if ever, to look after something, that greater Flames then those turned this City to Ashes, can't consume. God hath lately read to us a Lecture of the vanity of all Creature-enjoyments. The last year he took away many of our dearest friends (we now see from what) this year he hath taken away many of your Estates, and I fear the most of the Friends that you have left will go with them; you must not expect them to be so sweet, loving, and kind as sometimes they were: (the more will be their shame.) And will you after this refuse acquaintance with him, who will be better to you then a thousand of the best friends that ever man had upon earth. If you have lost your house,

he will find you a better, one that is admirably furnished, gallantly seated, where you shall sit Rent-free, or pay but a Pepper-corn; he will also bear all your charges for you, keep your house, and you shall want for nothing as long as an infinite store will hold out: You shall live higher, fare better, be clothed better, have a better trade, keep better company, and have every thing better then before. O that you would but try what this friend will do for you! and if after you have made a thorow trial of him, you do not find him far better then I can express, then also let me go for one of the most unfaithful friends in the world.

My love to poor *London*, the place of my Nativity, is great, and upon many accounts you may claim a greater interest in my affections, then any place in the world besides: and I could not tell how more lively to express my dear love to you, then by commending you to the care of this great friend, and by indeavouring all that I could possible to get you acquainted with him, whose favour is better then life, and whose friendship will infinitely supply all your wants. I have in this following Discourse given you a rude Character of this Friend, and I have laboured to shew you what unspeakable

ſpeakable advantage will accrue to you by your acquaintance with him in ſuch a time as this is: I have given you ſome Directions how you may come to be acquainted with him. Pray for a bleſſing upon this Book, which hath coſt the Author ſome pains, prayers, tears, and groans, that what was here written, might be the tranſcript of his own experience, and might be ſome way ſubſervient to the glory of God in the converſion and comfort of ſouls. Peruſe it with ſeriouſneſs, and it may be you may find that in it, that may make you more glad, then when your Corn and Wine and Oyl increaſed. You can now ſcarce ſay that you want time for ſuch a work as this is; if you do, I ſhall ſay you ſhal not want time to repent. I thought if any providences were waking, ſuch as theſe were, wherefore I deſired to ſtrike while the Iron was hot. O that the Lord would ſtrike in too! O that the effect of my poor labours, may be the bringing in of ſome of them that were formerly without Chriſt, and Aliens from the Commonwealth of *Iſrael*, and ſtrangers from the Covenant of promiſe, having no hope, and without God in the World, to be acquainted with God in Chriſt Jeſus; that they who were ſometimes afar off might be made nigh by the

blood of Christ: that you may be no more strangers and forreigners, but fellow Citizens with the Saints, and of the houshold of God. O if I may be but an instrument of the good of one soul I shall think my labours well spent, and my losses turned into gain. If you find any good in the use of this Book give God the praise, and labour to keep a constant warm sense of the excellency of such a Friend upon your Spirits: and commend this Friend to all your Relations and suffering Acquaintance, that none of them may after their great losses, lose God, Heaven, and their Souls too. O that will be a dreadful loss indeed! I again beseech you forget not to pray for one of the most unworthy Instruments that ever Infinite Goodness made use of in so glorious a work.

James Janeway.

Sept. 24.
1666.

HEAVEN UPON EARTH

Job 22. 21. *Acquaint now thy self with him, and be at peace, thereby good shall come unto thee.*

THose who have improved their experience of things by wisdom, and gathered up the value of mans life, by comparing his Desire with his Enjoyment, his Troubles and Sorrows with his Content and Joy, have concluded the whole of the life of man to be below nothing; they have drawn a black line upon the whole, and shut up all in darkness. Thus Jacob of old in the account which he gives of his life to *Pharaoh*, *Gen.* 47. 9. & *Job* 5. 7. And a wise man, who had an extraordinary measure of wisdom

from by Divine dispensation, who had a large spirit like the sand of the Sea-shore; he gave himself great liberty in trying what that good under the Sun for the Sons of men was, *Eccles.* 2. 1. When he had taken a taste of all the worlds Contents, yet he finds a bitterness mixed in all delights, which abideth no longer then the pleasure, *vers.* 11. &c. 17. And whosoever shall enter into himself, and feel the workings of his own mind, shall be able to read over the transcript of the same in his own conscience. Who is he among the sons of men, that in his natural life hath attained to a state wherein he was able to say, *Here I will stay, it is now well with me, I desire no addition to my present condition?* If there be any such, I dare undertake to prove him unacquainted with himself. Where now shall I fasten the blame of this universal evil? Shall we fall out with our life, as a thing not worth the having? Shall we shrink unto our former nothing, and cast up our being and life into the hands of God, as that out of which we gathered nothing but bitterness and disquiet? Far be this from us, this were to justifie that evil and wicked servant, who said of God, *That he knew he was a hard master, reaping where he had not sown, and gathering where he had not strawed.* This would be to accuse God of having made us to an unavoidable necessity of misery. How then comes it to pass, that we are all held fast in this common calamity? It is from thy self, O man, it is from thy self; this evil is because of our falling from God. It is a righteous thing with God, that when man departed from him, he should reap the fruit of his own doings; and indeed it is impossible for a creature of our compo-

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sure and constitution, but to feel it self dissatisfied with all worldly material employments, and to find trouble and disquiet in it self, while it is deprived of its true good. If we would have a true account of our disquiet and dissatisfaction, this it is. God made man of all the works of his hands, to be the neerest to himself, and hath fitted his principles for a higher life, then that which hath the things of this world for its object; but man hath made himself like the beasts that perish. We have given our souls into captivity to our bodies, or rather, we are fallen from our Union with God, and are gathered up into our selves, and become deprived of a sufficiency in separation from God; then it must needs be, that we being gone down into a lower state then that which we were made to, should find nothing but dissatisfaction and emptiness; here we are by nature, and hitherto we have brought our selves by forsaking God.

Now the great inquiry will be, what Remedy there is for this our woful condition; is there any way whereby we may be delivered from this misery? if there be, what way is it? These words which I have chosen to speak to, do contain the Answer to this Inquiry.

Acquaint now thy self with him, and be at peace, thereby good shall come unto thee. This is the counsel of one of *Job*'s three friends to him in the time of his great affliction. You have heard of the affliction of *Job*, and how his three friends came to relieve him with their counsel; but the Devil who had a Commission from God to try his utmost with *Job*, yet sparing his life, made use of his friends, who are to be a comfort in the hour

of

of adversity, to be a great means of his discovery, so that he cries out of them, *Miserable comforters are you all*, Chap. 16. 2. And the great way of their troubling him was, by misapplying, by making false application of true principles. In their Discourses there are many excellent Truths; yet by their hard construing, and ungrounded condemning of him, they by God are reproved, as not having spoken the thing that was right, *Chap.* 42. 7. yet in many things their counsel was suitable, and seasonable, of which sort, the words in the Text may be accounted. In this Chapter *Eliphaz* had been inquiring into the cause of *Job*'s great affliction, and holding this for an undeniable Principle, that the righteous God, being the great disposer of affliction, did bring this evil upon him because of his sin; he measured the greatness of his sins, by the greatness of his afflictions; he made account, because Gods hand was gone forth in an extraordinary manner against *Job*, therefore there was some extraordinary guilt upon him, *vers.* 5. & 13. *And how knowest, How doth God judge through the dark cloud?* Thus we have his apprehension of *Job*, as one under great affliction, because of his great sins; and the Text is *Eliphaz* his counsel to *Job*, under this character; and so is suitable advice to those that are under sickness, or great afflictions, and that are under the guilt of great sins.

Acquaint thy self with him, and be at peace, thereby good shall come unto thee. The words are a Doctrine for the soul under a sense of its lost condition, with a Promise very comfortable upon the embracing thereof.

The Doctrine is, *Acquaint thy self with him, and be at peace.*

The

The Promise: *Thereby good shall come unto thee.*

These words, *Be at peace*, may be referred either to the former, as an addition to the Doctrine, *Be at peace*, that is, keep your selves in a quiet submission to the hand of God; or to the latter, and so *be at peace*, is as much as, *peace shall be to thee.*

In the Doctrine we are to consider the *Act*, and *Object*.

The Act, *Acquaint.*

The Object is *God.*

DOCTRINE.

So that the *Doctrine* is, *To enter into acquaintance with God.* This Proposition stands forth to the view of every eye, that it is the Duty of man to be *acquainted with God.*

Now the first thing that is before us to enquire after, is, What this *acquaintance with God is.*

Secondly, to evidence and clear it to be the Duty of man to *acquaint himself with God.* Acquaintance with God implyes several things.

1. It signifies a full and determinate knowledge of this Truth, that there is a *God*, and so to know him, as to his Nature, distinct from all other *beings.*

There is a three-fold knowledge of God.

1. *A Rational.*
2. *A Natural.*
3. *A Supernatural.*

First, there is a *Rational knowledge of God*, which is a clear discovery of an Almighty, All-sufficient Cause of all things, which is attained by a Reasonable discussing Power of the Soul, which argueth from things that are visible and sensible

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to an invisible and self-principled Cause of all things. Man found himself brought into the world furnished with an innumerable variety of Creatures, and none of these having power to make it self; we see likewise such an accurate order in every particular Creature, and in all the Creatures one with another, that we cannot but see clearly that there is a Supream Almighty Cause of all things, who hath by his power, brought forth all things into being; who is likewise the most wise Agent, who by his unsearchable wisdom, hath curiously framed every creature, and by his wonderful counsel hath set them in such an order, that they all serve one another, till at length they all meet in man, as in the common center.

Secondly, there is a *Natural knowledge* of God, which is the inward touch, and mental sensation of a Supream Righteous Judge, to whose trial we feel our selves under an unavoidable bond, in doing *good* and *evil*. This is that which is commonly called *Conscience*; this a man finds in himself if at any time he have committed any secret sin whatsoever, which none in the world knows but himself; he feels it to be a pressure upon his spirit, as being under the examination of a power superiour to himself. Now this is nothing else but a secret impression that God hath made of himself upon the minds of men, by which man is bound to stand before the Tribunal of God. These two ways of knowing of God were very clear to man in his perfect state, but since the fall of man they are much weakened, and decayed.

Thirdly, There is a *Supernatural* way, by cre-

by

by we come to know God which hath repaired our loss by *Adams* sin, and that is by Gods extraordinary Revelation of himself in his holy Scriptures; by these we may come to have a more clear distinct knowledge of God, both that he is, and what he is. To these three ways of letting in the knowledge of God into the soul, three mental Acts of the soul do answer.

First, A Rational Discourse, by which we find out God by the Creatures.

Secondly, An inward sensation, which feels God as just in good and evil.

The third mental act is Faith, which for its foundation hath the Word of God.

There is a fourth way of knowing God, which is by experiment; which is when God manifests himself to his peculiar ones, and lets out the knowledge of himself to their souls; as when the Sun breaks forth with a bright shining in a cloudy day: but this belongeth rather to another head.

Thus you see the first thing implyed in this *acquaintance with God*, which is the lowest.

Yet how many are there that have little *acquaintance with God* in these signs? May we not come to many who profess they know God, and yet among all their thoughts, they have had few or none to satisfie themselves concerning him? How gross are the apprehensions of some concerning God? Some men resist and stifle that *Natural knowledge* that they have of God, such as those, *Rom.* 1. 20. they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, and God gave them over to a Reprobate mind, or a mind void of judgement, as the word signifies. Others have lived all their

days

dayes upon the bounty and goodness of God, and yet have not been led by the Streams to the Fountain, from which all hath flow'd. Others can busie themselves all their time in other things, and little inquire into the word of God, by which they may be lead to the knowledge of him: *But woe to those on whom the fury of the Lord shall be poured out, because they know not God*, Jer. 10, 23.

Secondly, *Acquaintance with God*, implyes frequent access unto God. We do not usually reckon our selves acquainted with any person, by a bare knowledge that such a person there is, and that we are able to give some General Description of him; but when we say we are acquainted with any, it is understood that we have been in such a ones company, we have come to him, and been with him: such is our acquaintance to be with God.

Under this Head I shall speak, First, *Of that separation that is of the soul from God.*

Secondly, *Of the return of the soul to God.*

Thirdly, *Of the abiding of the soul with God.*

First, Of the *Separation and distance of the soul from God.* That corrupted estate in which every man comes into the world, is a state of Separation from God. This distance is not to be understood as a Physical Natural Distance, for so God is neer to every one of us by his Omnipresence, and by his Infinite Power, sustaining us in our being and actions, *Acts* 17, 27, 28. *Though he be not far from every one of us; for in him we live, move, and have our being.* But this is to be understood,

First, *Of a moral separation from God.* There is a great strangeness between our souls and God: we reckon our selves to have little to do with

him,

him, and to be very remotely concerned in him: we reckon that God takes very little regard of us, we look upon God as far from us, & we think God looks upon us as at a great distance; we love not God, and think that God loves not us.

Secondly, This *Separation* may be understood of a *Judicial Distance*, at which God hath set sinful man from himself. Man is kept out from God, as being unfit to approach to him in his sinfulness and impurities; and that is either in this life, in which condition every one is, *till he be made nigh by Christ, and set before the Father without sin in him; till they are born again of the Spirit, and justified, and sanctified by Christ*, Ephes. 2. 13. *He that sometimes were afar off, were made near by the blood of Christ*. Here this Judicial Separation is the execution of that terrible Sentence, *Depart from me ye cursed into everlasting fire prepared for the Devil and his Angels*, Matth. 25. 41. Thus ye see the Distance at which man is from God, which is not Physical, but either Moral or Judicial.

Secondly, When we are thus separated from God, if we will be *acquainted* with him, there is required a returning to God. *Acquaintance* doth necessarily imply an Union: now where there was a former *separation* and *distance*, there is required a motion to complyance, and a return either in both parties, or in one at least; so that before ever we can be *acquainted with God*, there must be a forsaking our former distance, the separation must be removed. Now God hath done what could be conceived, and beyond what could be expected towards the reducing of us to an union with himself; whereas he might justly have thrust us away from him for ever, and never

have

have given us liberty to come near him more, as being so filthy by sin, that his holiness cannot endure us: yet he hath freely set open a door of hope for our return: he did not come thus nigh to Angels when they fell, but they were turned away from him, and are bound in chains of darkness to the Judgement of the great day: it is impossible for them to return any more. And so it would have been for us, had not God made it possible by an Act of Free Love; and he hath likewise revealed his willingness to receive us if we return, yea, his earnest desire, *Turn ye, why will ye die?* Yea, his rejoycing in our return, as a Father rejoyceth to receive a prodigal Son that hath departed from him. But that God should go further, to close with us while we retain our impurities, and remain at a distance from him, it is impossible, because of the unchangeableness and simplicity of his Nature, and because of the purity and exactness of his holiness; it must therefore necessarily follow, that a yielding and return must be on our parts, or else there is no possibility of compliance between God and us, after that we have forsaken him by sin. And this is most righteous and equal; for man did forsake God, God did not forsake man; man made the difference; man ran away from God; God follows man as far as his holiness and unchangable nature will permit him; he calls to us to return, he is ready to meet and imbrace us in the armes of his Love, and to receive us into acquaintance with himself, as the Father in the Parable met his prodigal Son. *Luk.* 15. 20. *He saw him afar off, and had compassion on him, ran and fell on his neck, and kissed him.* Herein have we

shadowed out to us the great readiness of God to receive returning sinful man; but as the Prodigal Son must return to his Father, so man must return to God. Now it is sin that separates between us and God, and keeps good things from us, *Isa.* 59. 2. *Your iniquity hath separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you.* Therefore while we cleave to our sins, we are separated from God: till we are separated from our sins, we cannot be united to God. Thus ye see our separation from God, and our necessity of returning to God, before there can be any acquaintance with him.

Thirdly, *To our acquaintance with God*, is required an abiding with God. We reckon not our selves acquainted with any person upon the first meeting, or when there hath passed but a word or two between us; but it is supposed to acquaintance, that we have made a considerable stay with him, and have had frequent access to him. Thus it is between God and us: we must not only come to him, but abide with him, or else we shall never be acquainted with him, *Joh.* 8. 13. *If ye continue in my Word, then are ye my Disciples.* So I say, if you return to God, and continue with God, then shall ye be acquainted with him indeed. *Acquaintance*, signifies not a bare Act, but a State or Habit. Now this is the difference between an Act and a State; that an Act is passing and is gone; but a State signifies an abiding and continuance. There may be a drawing nigh to God without abiding and continuing with God, upon some deep conviction, or strange providence, or eminent danger; as it is said, *In their affliction, they will seek me early.*

Yet they may ſoon forget and forſake God. This is but a ſeeming and practical approaching to God, a drawing nigh in appearance, when the heart is far from God: but that approaching to God which makes acquaintance with God, is abiding with him. Thoſe that are acquainted with a ſpiritual life know theſe things what they are, and that they are the greateſt realities in the world; they know that ſometimes there is a greater nearneſs of their ſouls to God, they are ſenſible of the approaches of their heart to God, and of the withdrawing of their ſouls from God, they know what it is for the ſoul to feel the approaches of God, and his ſmiles fill their ſouls with unſpeakable comfort: and to feel God withdrawing from the ſoul, this clouds their joy, and makes them go mourning: they can tell you at ſuch a time they were brought unto his Banqueting-houſe, and his Banner over them was Love: They can tell you at ſuch time Chriſt came into his Garden to eat his pleaſant fruits; at ſuch a time they heard the voice of their Beloved, ſaying, *Open to me, my Siſter, my Spouſe, my Love, my Dove, my undefiled.* And when the ſoul hath neglected this knock of Chriſt to open to him, that then he hath withdrawn: *I opened to my Beloved, but my beloved had withdrawn himſelf, and was gone.* Theſe things are the experiences of a precious child of God, which I fear are little felt, and little known amongſt us: but where theſe things are not, there is no *acquaintance with God.* For,

Firſt, *They do know him.*

Secondly, *They draw nigh to him, they have access to him.*

Thirdly

Thirdly, *They have intimate converse with him.* This is another thing required to acquaintance. We are not said to be acquainted with any person, unless we have had intimate converse with him. We may be next-Neighbours, and yet have no acquaintance, unless our conversation hath been mutual. So it is between God and us; there may be a nighness between the soul and God, and yet no acquaintance between the soul and God. We are nigh to God in our dependance upon him, we are near to God by his immediate providence and sustentation of us, and by his Omnipotence. There is a neatness to God by way of Dedication. As God set apart the children of *Israel* to be a people near unto himself; so the visible Church of God is nearer to him then those that are not of the Church. There is a nearness of Dedication among us by Baptism. But all this may be without acquaintance. There is therefore required to our acquaintance with God, an intimate converse with God. We have great converse with those who are of the Family or society with us. Now such is our acquaintance with God, as those who are of his family. God is called the Father of the Families of all the earth: and the visible Church is reckoned as Gods Family; but in a great Family there may be little acquaintance with those persons which be of remote employments: but to acquaintance with God there must be such a relation as implyes familiar converse. This intimacy that the people of God have to him, is expressed by the nearest relations in Scripture. As *Abraham* is called *The Friend of God*, 2 Chron. 20. 7. *Jehoshaphat* prayes unto God, and

saith, Art not thou our God, who didst drive out the inhabitants of this land before thy people Israel, and gavest it to the seed of Abraham *thy Friend for ever? And the Lord spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh to his Friend,* Exod. 33. 11. John 15. 15. *Henceforth I call you not servants, but friends, for the servant knows not what his Lord doth; but I have called you Friends, for all things that I have heard of my Father, I have made known unto you.* Now by *Friend* is commonly understood a state of converse and society one with another. And this intimacy is expressed likewise by the Relation of Husband and Wife, *Isa.* 54. 5. *For thy Maker is thy Husband.* Hos. 2. 7. *Then shall she say, I will go and return to my Husband, for then was it better with me then now.* By *Husband* there is meant *God.* And the whole Book of the *Canticles* is a relation of the mutual converse betwixt God and his people, betwixt Christ and his Church, under the relation of a *Bridegroom* and his *Spouse.* Now what converse more intimate then between Husband and Wife? Such is that between a soul acquainted with God, and God. Again, this is shadowed out to us under the relation of a Father and his Children, 1 *John* 3. 1. *Behold, what manner of Love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called his sons!* And the holy Spirit is given to be the Spirit of Adoption in the hearts of Gods people, *Rom.* 8. 15, 16. *Ye have received the Spirit of Adoption, whereby ye cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit it self beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.* What is signified by this *Relation,* but a nigh union and intimate converse between the soul and God? And this is necessary to our acquaintance with God, even intimate converse with God. By

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this I mean a nearness of employment, when the Objects of our employments are the same, then are we said to converse with God, when we are employed about those things wherein God is most. When there is, as it were, a mutual commerce and trading between the soul and God; man giving himself up to God, and God giving himself out to man; man taking up the interest of God, and God undertaking for the interest of man: These & such like actings are the converse which the soul hath with God. I speak of things which the men of the world are not acquainted with; but those that are acquainted with God, know these things, and upon the mention of them, their hearts leap within them. As face answereth to face in a glass, so experience answereth these things. When this string is struck, their hearts do harmonize; as when a Lute-string is struck, the other strings of highest concord with it move also. But these things are a mystery to the world, and they say as those of Christs word, *we know not what he saith.* And it is no wonder, for they are the actings of a Divine Life, to which all are naturally dead, till they are raised to newness of life by the quickning of the Spirit of God. But I proceed to shew what is meant by this acquaintance with God.

Fourthly, To this acquaintance with God, there is required a mutual communication. Where there is acquaintance between man and man, there hath been a mutual interchange of conference and discourse. Thus when the soul is acquainted with God, there is an interchange of conference between God and the soul. The soul openeth its wants, breaths out its com-

plaints, spreadeth its necessities before God: God openeth the treasures of his love in his Son, the rich Mynes of his precious Promises, and the secrets of his good Will to the soul. Thus *Psal.* 25. 15. *The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and he will shew them his Covenant.* Gen. 18. 17. *The Lord saith, shall I hide from Abraham the thing that I do?* Those that are friends and acquaintance, they will let out their thoughts and purposes one to another, and they give out themselves mutually into communion one with another. Thus Christ knocks at the door of the soul, *Rev.* 3. 20. *Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in and sup with him, and he with me.* Here is Christ offering himself to the soul, and the soul is to entertain him; at another time the soul goes to God, and God entertains it: God hath promised that he will open, *Matth.* 7. 28. *Knock, and it shall be opened unto you*; and to him that knocks it shall be opened. There are frequent actings among those that are acquainted: And by these are expressed to us the acquaintance of the soul with God.

Now the communications that are between the soul and God, are exceeding transcending all communications that are between mens acquaintance. Men may communicate their thoughts, their estates, their assistance to one another; but they cannot communicate their life, nor their nature, nor their likeness; but such communications there are between God and the soul that is acquainted with him. All *being* is a communication from God the first *being*; nay the several degrees of *being*, have several communica-

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ons from God, some greater and some lesser; spiritual beings have a higher communication then natural; but Gods highest communications have been to man in that mystical Union of the Divine Nature to the Humane Nature in Christ; and next in the mystical union of the Sons of God to Christ, and in him to the Father. Thus Christ is said to live in us, *Colos.* 2. 20. *I live*, saith *Paul*, *yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.* Thus Christ prayes the Father for his Children, that they may be one, *as thou Father art in me, and I in thee; that they be one in us*, Joh. 4. 17, 21. & Joh. 1. 15, 16. *Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God. He that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God*, 2 Pet. 1. 4. *We are said to be partakers of the Divine Nature.* This expression implyes high Communication of God to man. Again, there are high Acts of Communication from man to God (for though God receives not from man, yet man is to act as giving out himself to God:) such as to give up the will to Gods will. As that of *Eli*, *It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good.* And that of *David*, 2 Sam. 15. 16. *If he thus say, I have no delight in thee, behold, here am I, let him do with me as seemeth good unto him.*

Another act of high Communication of a mans self to God, is parting with present enjoyments for future hopes, in confidence of Gods promise. Thus the Spirit of God works in the children of God a readiness to forsake Father or Mother, and Brethren, and Sister, and Life it self for the cause of God. Thus *John Baptist* was willing to become *Nothing*, that Christ might become *all*, to be cast *down*, that Christ might be lifted *up*, Joh. 3. 18. *He must increase, but I must decrease.*

Thus *Abraham* gives his *Isaac* to dye when God calls for him. Thus *Moses* esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches then the treasures of *Egypt*, Heb. 11.26. *Paul* counted not his life dear for Christ, *Acts* 20.24. These have been the actings of the souls of those that have been acquainted with God; and such workings as these, are the feeling of a child of God.

I have shewed you four things which are requisite to acquaintance with God.

First, Knowledge of God.

Secondly, Access to him.

Thirdly, Converse with him.

Fourthly, Communication to him and from him.

Fifthly, There is likewise required to acquaintance a loving compliance. Amongst men Acquaintance implyes Affection. And so it is between God and man. Never any soul was acquainted with God, that did not love God; and such a soul is an enemy to God; therefore very few are acquainted with God: but all that are not acquainted with God, are enemies to God. If we should come to a person that is not acquainted with God, and say, Thou art an enemy to God; this would seem a heavy imputation; but I speak it freely, thou, whosoever thou art, that art not acquainted with God, thou art an enemy to God; for thou art still as thou wert born; but we are all enemies to God according to our corrupt nature, and abide enemies till we come to be acquainted with God. Love to God, and acquaintance with God go together, are heightened by one another. First, God lets into the soul by his Spirit a partial discovery of himself, and by

by this, with the working of his Spirit, he incline the heart in love to him. Then, on the first working of the soul toward God, he lets in a clear light, whereby he draweth the soul to a further degree of love. A clear place for this, *Ephes.* 3. 17, 18. *And that being rooted and grounded in love, ye may be able to comprehend with all Saints, what is the length, and breadth, and depth, and height; and to know the love of God which passeth all understanding; that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.* The love of God fits the soul to comprehend the glorious discoveries of God; and the discoveries of God doth heighten our love to God. Acquaintance with God makes us like unto God, as in *Joh.* 3. 2. *We shall see him as he is.* And our likeness to God, as it makes us the delight of God, so it makes us delight in God; for the cause of Complacency and Love is a likeness between the Lover and Beloved. God doth not love us with a love of complacency, till we are like him; nor do we love God, till we are made like God. Now our beholding God, and being acquainted with him, is a great way to our being made like to God, 2 *Cor.* 3. 18. *We all with open face, beholding as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.* Thus you see that love is likewise required to our acquaintance with God; without it no acquaintance.

I have in the first part spoken of the Nature of acquaintance with God in five particulars. There must be,

First, A knowledge of God.

Secondly, Nigh access to God.

Thirdly, Familiar converse with God.

Fourthly,

Fourthly, Mutual communication between us and God.

Fifthly, An affectionate love towards God.

The next thing should be to shew that man is to be acquainted with God; but we will first take a review of these things. We have taken these things into our understandings; now let us set our hearts to these things, for in these things is the life of Religion. If there be acquaintance with God, then gross wickedness drops off, as scales from an ulcerated body, when the constitution of the body is mended. In acquaintance with God will be your only true comfort in this life; and the perfection of it, is the very happiness of Heaven. Let us then behold, till our hearts earnestly desire, till our souls be drawn out after acquaintance with God. If God be to be known, to be approached unto, to be conversed with by me, will he communicate himself to me? and I my self to him. Oh that he would love me, that I might love him! Oh, blessed are they that know him, as they are known of him! It is good for me to draw nigh to him. *A day in his courts is better then a thousand elsewhere. My soul longeth, yea fainteth for the courts of the Lord. My heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God.* Oh that I were received into converse with God! that I might hear his voice, and see his countenance, for his voice is sweet, and his countenance comly! Oh that I might communicate my self to God, and that he would give himself to me! Oh that I might love him! that I were sick of Love! that I might die in Love! that I might lose my self in his Love, as a small drop in the unfathomless depth of his Love! that I might dwell in

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the eternal love of him! This is *acquaintance with God.*

Acquaint now thereforethy self with God, and be at peace, so shall good come unto thee. We now proceed to the next thing, which is to evidence it to be the duty of man, to acquaint himself with God. This then is that into which the whole Scripture runs, as into a common Channel. The Scriptures are a discovery of Gods proceedings with man under a double Covenant, and this is the great design of God in both Covenants. The first Covenant was, *That while man did remain in obedience to God, God would give man free and intimate acquaintance with himself.* But if man became disobedient, then he should be dispossessed of an interest in God, and of Communion with him; which was that death threatned upon *the eating the forbidden Fruit.* The death of the body is its being separated from the Soul: but the death of the Soul, is in separation from God. Now immediately upon *Adams* transgression, man becomes unacquainted with God: so that upon the hearing of the voyce of the Lord, *they hid themselves from the presence of the Lord, among the trees of the garden.* What a wofull case is man naturally in? He hath lost his acquaintance with God, and was in a way, never, never to recover it: upon Gods approach he flees. And such is the nature of all sin, it puts a man into a disposition to greater sins: every departure from God inclines towards a greater. In the first Covenant this is the whole of it; it is both a command to keep nigh to God, and a promise of Gods being nigh to them, and a threatning of Gods putting them away far from him, man breaking the first

Covenant.

Covenant. The immediate effect of it was the sin of fleeing from God, quite contrary to that acquaintance. Instead of their former apprehensions of God, they seem to have forgotten his omniprosence; instead of peace with God, they have nothing but dread and torment in the thoughts of God; instead of drawing nigh to God, they run away from him; instead of converse with God, they choose never to have to doe with him more; instead of giving themselves up to God, they, if it had been possible, would have hid themselves from God. Acquaintance with God is the sum of the first Covenant; unacquaintance with God is the misery of the breach of the Covenant. This is likewise the great design and purpose of God in the second Covenant. The second Covenant is this: When God beheld man in a miserable condition, by reason of the breach of the first Covenant; in the unsearchable riches of his goodness, according to the eternal purpose of his good will towards man, he made an agreement with his Son to send him amongst a generation of sinful men, that if he would undertake to bring them back into acquaintance with the Father, he was willing and ready to receive them again into acquaintance with him; the Son being the express image of his Fathers will, and person, hath the same good will to man with the Father, and is ready to close with his Fathers proposals; and so enters into a Covenant with the Father, to satisfie divine Justice, and to take away sin, and to take away the middle wall of separation, to recover the lost sinful generation, and to bring them back again to God. Thus he becomes the head of another Cove-

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nant between God and man. And as the first Covenant was made with *Adam* for him and his seed: So the second Covenant is made with Jesus Christ for him and his seed. Because that the first Covenant was broken in *Adam*, therefore the second Covenant was put into surer hands, into the hands of the Son, *the second Adam*, the Lord from heaven. Now, I say, that the great design and purpose of this second Covenant is in reference to mans acquaintance with God is clear. This is held forth to us in that parable of the lost sheep, Luke 15. 4. *When the shepherd had lost one sheep, he leaves the flock, and seeks for that which was lost.* So, when man was lost by sin, Jesus Christ leaves all, to recover and fetch home that which was lost. *We all are gone astray like lost sheep*, as David *seek of himself*, Psal. 119. *Christ is come to seek, and to save, that which was lost*, Luke 19. 10. and Ephes. 2. 13, 14. *But now in Christ Jesus they who sometimes were afar off, are made nigh by the blood of Christ: for he is our peace, who hath made both one.* In verse the tenth, is a description of our state without Christ, *being aliens from the Common-wealth of Israel, being strangers from the Covenants of promise, and having no hope, and without God in the world.* This is a description of our unacquaintance with God. But Christ makes up the breach, and that by a double Act.

First, by Covenant with the Father, to make man fit for communion with him.

Secondly, His giving man assurance that the Father will receive him upon his return.

This then is the great design in all those glorious accomplishments of Christ, for this he left his Fathers bosom, that he might bring us into acquaint-

acquaintance with the Father; for this end did he who thought it no robbery to be equal with the Father, make himself of no reputation, and took upon him the *form of a servant*, and was made in the *likeness of men*; and being found in fashion of a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, *even the death of the Cross*, that he might bring man into a re-union with God; for this end did Christ live a wearisome troublesome life among a company of Rebels and Enemies, as if a man should live among Toads and Serpents: So that he cried out, as weary of any longer abiding with them, *Oh faithless generation! How long shall I be with you? How long shall I suffer you?* For this did he make himself an *offering for sin*; that by taking away sin, he might bring men to God. This is the great purpose of Christ in all his offices. Ye have heard of the three Offices of the Mediator, that he is a *Priest*, a *Prophet* and a *King*. This is the end of the Priestly Office: The purpose of Christs offering up himself a Sacrifice, was by satisfying the justice of God, to make way for sinners return to God. This is the end of his prophetical Office, to lead men into knowledg and acquaintance with God. This is the end of his Kingly Office; That governing them, and ruling their hearts by his Spirit, he might effectually bring men to God, to acquaintance with him. Now then, since this is the great design of God in his great dispensation towards man, to keep men in acquaintance with himself, and to reduce him when he had lost it: doth it not concern us to doe our part for the bringing to pass this great work? shall God lose his end in making us, and in setting man in the

world

world every way furnished for his service? and shall God lose his end in sending his Son to receive us when we had forsaken him? Shall Christ leave his Fathers bosom to bring us home to the Father, and shall we refuse to return? Shall he pour out his soul an offering for sin, that he might make way for our access to God, *that we who were far off, might be made nigh by the blood of Christ*? and shall we frustrate all by our refusing to goe to him? shall Christ come and offer us his help and direction to come to the Father, and shall we abide still strangers? Shall the Kings Son come into our Cottages to invite us to dwell with his Father at Court, and shall we shut the door upon him, esteeming our Cottages better then his Pallace?

Secondly, It is the duty of man to acquaint himself with God, because therein is the improvement of his highest excellency. Every one acknowledgeth an excellency in man, above all the rest of this lower world: Now what is this excellency of man? Is it not that he is made in a capacity of knowing God, and enjoying God, and having Communion with God? This is the heighth of his glory, Jerem. 9. 23, 24. *Thus saith the Lord, let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, let not the mighty man glory in his might, nor the rich man in his riches; but let him that glorieth, glory in this, that he understands and knoweth me, that I am the Lord that exercise loving kindness, and righteousness in the earth, and judgement, for in these things I delight, saith the Lord.* Ye see here, wherein man is to glory, for which he may value himself as truly glorious. In his understanding, and knowing of God, man standeth above the rest of the Creatures

tures, in that he is a rational intellectual Agent. This is part of the image of God, even knowledge, *Col.* 3. 10. *which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him.* The nigher any thing resembleth God, the greater is the excellency of that thing: now in this we resemble God more then any other Creature, in that we are knowing, understanding Agents; and the highest improvement of this excellency of man, is in the knowledge of God, and acquaintance with God, *Prov.* 20. 27. *The spirit of a man is called the candle of the Lord*; that is, it is a light set up in the soul, to direct the soul to a discovery of God. This is the highest improvement of our greatest excellency, and this is the excellency of man above other creatures: this is that whereby one man excels another. Who are those whose names are as precious ointment poured forth? Who are those which have obtained a good report? Are not they those who were most acquainted with God? *Enoch* is said to walk with God; an expression which signifies intimate acquaintance with God; and therefore was *translated that he should not see death.* And *Noah*, whose family alone was preserved when God destroyed the old World by water, he was said to walk with God, *Gen.* 6. 9. Among all the sons of men he kept close to God; & God took care of him alone. *Abraham*, who was the Father of the Faithful, he was called *the Friend of God.* *Moses*, who was the Mediator of the old Covenant, he was said to *speak with God face to face, as one man speaketh to his friend.* I might make mention of many more, who were the excellent ones of the earth; because they did delight in God, and God delighted in them, *Mal.* 3. 16, 17.

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They that feared the Lord, spake often one to another, and the Lord hearkened and heard: and the book of remembrance was written for them that fear the Lord, and that thought upon his name: And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of Hosts, in the day when I make up my Jewels. Ye see how God accounts of those that are of his acquaintance, that met together and spake of God, and that thought upon his name; he reckons them amongst his Jewels, his peculiar Treasure: such honour have all those that are acquainted with God. Ye see then the excellency of man above all the rest of the other Creatures. Now if man fail in this which is his highest excellency, he will become the vilest of Creatures. Every thing if it fail in its chiefest end and purpose, and highest excellency, becomes base and of no account: *If salt lose its savour* (saith our Saviour) *it is good for nothing.* If man have lost his acquaintance with God, he is henceforth good for nothing. The mind of man is his eye, by which he is to behold God; now if this eye be blind, if the light be darkness, how great is that darkness! The *Jews* in *Ezek.* 15. 1. are likened to a Vine, which, if it be barren, is good for no use: shall wood be taken thereof for any work? It is fit for nothing but to burn. So it is in man, his great use and excellency is his acquaintance with God: now if he fails in this, he is good for nothing. Verily, man is a base, vile, worthless thing without acquaintance with God. None are less esteemed among men then they that want wisdom to converse among men. None are less esteemed before God, then they that know him not, that have not acquaintance with him, to con-

verſe with him. Ye ſee wherein the excellency and worth of man conſiſteth, and that if there be a deformity, where ought to be our chiefeſt beauty, the whole is accounted as a deformed piece. It concerns us then to look that we keep our glory unſpotted, our excellency in its due value; that we do not degrade our ſelves below what God hath placed us in. If we are not acquainted with God, our ſouls ſerve us to little purpoſe: it is a cauſing the Prince, the Soul, to go on foot, and to ſerve the body, which ſhould be as a ſervant; it is to let the candle of the Lord burn out in waſte.

Thirdly, Another enforcement of this duty of Acquaintance with God, is this. If we refuſe acquaintance with God, it is a ſlighting the greateſt of all the mercies that God beſtowes. Favours are to be valued, either by their proper excellencies, or according to the good will of him that beſtowes them: both theſe ways this is to be accounted the greateſt of mercies. In Gods giving us leave to be acquainted with him, he gives out himſelf to be known, to be loved, to be converſed with, to be enjoyed. What greater gift can God give then himſelf? God is the portion of his people, he is the greateſt portion, the ſureſt, the moſt ſuitable, and the only durable portion. Thus they that know him eſteem of him, *Pſal.* 37.26. *My fleſh and my heart faileth, but God is the ſtrength of heart, and portion for ever, Pſal.* 16. 5, 6. *The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance: the lines are fallen to me in a pleaſant place; yea, I have a goodly heritage. Bleſſed are the people that are in ſuch a caſe; yea, bleſſed are the people whoſe God is the Lord.* No

greater

greater mercy can be bestowed upon any people, family, or person, then this, for God to dwell among them. If we value this mercy according to the excellency and worth of that which is bestowed, it is the greatest; if we value it according to the good will of him that gives it, it will appear likewise to be the greatest favour. The greatness of the good will of God in giving himself to be our acquaintance, is evident in the nature of the gift. A man may give his estate to them to whom his love is not very large; but he never gives himself but upon strong affection. God gives abundantly to all the works of his hands, he causeth the Sun to shine upon the evil, and upon the good; and the rain to descend upon the just and the unjust: but it cannot be conceived, that he should give himself to be a Portion, a Friend, Father, Husband, but in abundance of Love. Whosoever therefore shall refuse acquaintance with God, slighteth the greatest favour that ever God did bestow upon man. Now consider what a high charge this is; to abuse such a kindness from God, is an act of the greatest vileness. *David* was never so provoked, as when the King of *Ammon* abused his kindness in his Ambassadors, after his Fathers death. And God is highly provoked when his greatest mercies, bestowed in the greatest love, are rejected, and cast away. What could God give more and better then himself? And how heavy will this imputation be! These are those that look upon God, as not worth being acquainted with. Let us therefore consider how we shall be able to stand to these Accusations. Shall we not be speechless, when these things shall be charged

upon us? Shall we not be confounded, when we ſtand to the trial of him to whom we had offered theſe great indignities? How ſhall we eſcape if we neglect ſo great ſalvation, ſo great a mercy?

Fourthly, it concerns us to acquaint our ſelves with God, for without it we are in a neceſſity of ſin and miſery.

The ſoul unacquainted with God is in a neceſſity of ſinning, *Epheſ.* 4. 14. *Having their underſtanding darkened, alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in them, becauſe of the blindneſs of their hearts.* For want of acquaintance with God, every thought and imagination of their heart is evil continually, *Rom.* 3. 10, 11. *There is none righteous, no not one: There is none that underſtands, there is none that ſeeketh after God.* Not underſtanding, nor ſeeking after God, is the neceſſary cauſe that there is *none doth good.* The ſoul of man is an Active *being*, which is continually in motion; if it be not in motion to God and in God, it will be in motion from God. Hence it is that the prayer of the wicked is an abomination; that which goes for prayer, God abhors, becauſe they are not acquainted with him, *Iſa.* 1. 3. *The ox knows his owner, and the aſs his maſters crib, but* Iſrael *doth not know me*, verſ. 13, 14. To this, ſaith he, *your incenſe is abomination unto me, their new moons and ſabbaths, the calling of aſſemblies, I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even your ſolemn meetings.* Now the reaſon why there is a neceſſity of ſin without acquaintance with God, is, becauſe whatſoever is not done with a good heart, is not good, *Luk.* 6. 45. *The good man out of the good treaſure of his heart bringeth forth good things,*

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and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth evil fruit: for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. As an evil tree cannot bring forth good fruit, so an evil heart cannot bring forth a good action. Now without knowledge the heart is not good, *Prov.* 19, 2. *That the soul be without knowledg is not good.* And there is no knowledge like the knowledge of God, And acquaintance with him, to make the heart good; *Hos.* 4. 2. *Because there is not truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land; therefore by swearing, and lying, and killing, and stealing, and committing adultery they break out*, &c. Thus want of knowledg of God, and acquaintance with God, we may plainly see is the necessary cause of sin. Now there is no greater evil on this side Hell, then that of a necessity of sinning, 2 *Pet.* 2. 14. Those of which it is said, *they cannot cease from sinning*, are called *cursed children*. He that chuseth any sin rather then affliction, doth it through the blindness of his mind. This is laid as a heavy accusation, *Job* 34. 21. *For this hast thou chosen rather then affliction.* To chose iniquity rather then affliction, is the greatest folly imaginable. It is one great part of the misery of Hell, that they never cease from sinning; and this is the greatest misery on earth, our being so much under the power of sin. I appeal to any gracious soul that hath the feeling of the burden of sin; what is its great trouble and sorrow? is it not because of sin? What are his secret moans to God? is it not the sense of corruption? *Oh wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death*, saith *Paul*, *Rom.* 7. He had been complaining of the mass of corruption that did still press hard upon him, and in

the ſtrong workings of his ſpirit againſt it, he calls it *The body of death*. It was as grievous to him as if he had been bound to a ſtinking rotten carcaſe. How wretched then is the ſtate of every ſoul unacquainted with God? who can do nothing but ſin, becauſe they want the right rule of action, a right pattern of imitation, a right principle for action, a right object for action, a right end for action, the only aſſiſtance of action. It concerns us then as we make any difference between good and evil, if we have any reſpect unto holineſs and purity before ſin and iniquity, to ſeek to get acquaintance with God; becauſe without acquaintance with God, we are in a woful neceſſity of ſinning.

2. Without acquaintance with God, we are in a neceſſity of miſery. Indeed ſin is a great miſery; and to be in a neceſſity of ſinning, is part of the neceſſity of miſery. But beſides that, there is a neceſſity of miſery of another kind. What is the great imployment of men unacquainted with God? Men labour in the very fire, and weary themſelves for very vanity, *Habak.* 2. 13. *This was the miſery of men, becauſe they knew not God.* But in *verſ.* 14. there is a promiſe of better days. *When the earth ſhall be filled with the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the ſea.* Then and not till then will there be a deliverance from labouring in the fire, when there is the knowledge of God. The reaſon of it is, becauſe true ſatisfaction and peace cannot be, till our deſires and enjoyments are alike; and this cannot be till the ſoul is acquainted with God: For nothing can fill up the deſires of the ſoul but God. The ſoul of man is mighty ſpacious, ſo that it cannot be filled with the world;

world; and while it feels an emptineſs, it ſtill cryes out for more, and cannot be filled till it be filled with the fulneſs of God, *Epheſ.* 3. 19. The prodigal ſon had nothing but huſks to feed upon, when he was gone from his fathers houſe; he would faine have filled his belly with the huſks, but could not; they were not food for the ſoul. When we are departed from God, we have nothing to feed on but the world, and we would fill our ſouls with the world, but cannot; for it is not food for the ſoul. *Acquaintance* with God is the food of the ſoul. *Job* 23.12. *I have eſteemed the words of his mouth more then my neceſſary food.* So that a ſoul that is not acquainted with God, is famiſhed for want of food, *Pſal.*42.2. *My ſoul thirſteth for God, for the living God. When ſhall I come and appear before God?* *David* was acquainted with God, but for want of an actual enjoyment, how doth he here breath out the trouble of his ſpirit? *As the Hart panteth after the water-brooks, ſo panteth my ſoul after thee, O God.* The ſoul is ſtill panting. Some pant after the duſt of the earth, *Amos* 2.7. Theſe were of the Serpents ſeed, whoſe curſe from God was, *Duſt ſhalt thou eat*: but the ſeed of Chriſt, they pant for God, and they that pant after God ſhall be filled with the fulneſs of God: but he that panteth after any thing beſides God, will never find any fulneſs; he will feed as upon the duſt of the earth. And what can follow but diſſatisfaction and miſery? Acquaintance with God is the only way to be freed from a neceſsiey of ſin and miſery.

Fifthly, Acquaintance with God is the duty of man, becauſe God himſelf doth acquaint himſelf with man, Shall the King ſeek after acquaintance

with the meaneſt of his Subjects, and he refuſe acquaintance with his Soveraign? Shall God acquaint himſelf with man, and ſhall not man acquaint himſelf with God? It is expected among men, that the inferiour ſhould ſeek for acquaintance with the Superiour, and not the Superiour to the inferiour; but yet God out of his wonderful love hath ſought firſt to man for acquaintance. Thus *Prov.*8.31. it is ſaid concerning the ſon of God, who is meant by *the Eternal Wiſdom of the Father, that he rejoyced in the habitable parts of the earth, and his delight was with the ſons of men.* If God thus delights in converſe and acquaintance with the ſons of men, how much more ought men to rejoyce in converſe and acquaintance with God, *Iſa.* 65.1. God ſaith, *I am found of them that ſought me not.* All men were departed from God, and not a man that did ſeek after God; there is none that underſtands or ſeeks after God, yet God is found of them. The good Shepherd ſeeks his loſt ſheep, before the ſheep ſought him. *Cant.*5.2. When the ſoul is aſleep, it hears the voice of its Beloved that knocks, ſaying, *Open to me my ſiſter, my love, my dove, my undefiled.* Revel. 3.20. There Chriſt ſaith to the revolting Church, that he was ready to ſpew them out of his mouth, *Behold, I ſtand at the door, and knock: if any man will hear me, and open the door, I will come in and ſup with him, and he with me.* Pſal.68.18. *Thou haſt aſcended on high, thou haſt led captivity captive, thou haſt received gifts for men, yea, for the rebellious alſo, that the Lord God might dwell among them.* Is it not becoming then that man ſhould open when God knocks? He ſeeks to dwell among the rebellious; is it not fit that man ſhould enter into acquaintance

quaintance with God, when God doth thus acquaint himself with man? Thus I have opened to you the Nature of Acquaintance with God, and evidenced it to be the *Duty of Man*, to acquaint himself with God; let us now make some improvement of this Truth.

USE 1.

First, Is there to be an acquaintance between the soul and God? Let us then stand and wonder at the great condescention of God! This may surprise our souls with an extasie of admiration, that God should dwell with man, that the mighty *Jehovah* should have such respect to the work of his hands. *Psal.* 113. 5, 6. *Who is like unto the Lord, who dwelleth on high? who humbleth himself to behold the things that are in heaven, and in earth?* The Psalmist admireth God, that he humbled himself to behold things that are in heaven; and how much more then is he to be admired, that he humbled himself to acquaint himself with man? Let us then be filled with admiration, that God should take us so nigh unto himself. As *Psal.* 8. 4. *What is man that thou art mindful of him! or the son of man, that thou shouldest visit him!* And Job 7. 17, 18. *What is man that thou shouldest magnifie him! and that thou shouldest set thy heart upon him! and that thou shouldest visit him every morning!* Man in the pride of his heart seeth no such great matter in it; but an humble soul is filled with astonishment. *Isa.* 57. 15. *Thus saith the high and lofty One, which inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place: with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the*

humble,

humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones. Oh saith the humble soul, will the Lord have respect unto such a vile worm as I am? Will the Lord acquaint himself with such a sinful wretch as I am? Will the Lord open his arms, his bosome, his heart to me? Shall such a loathsome creature as I find favour in his eyes? In *Ezek.* 16. 15. We have a relation of the wonderful condescention of God to man, who is there resembled to a wretched infant cast out in the day of its birth in its bloud, and filthiness, no eye pitying it; such loathsome creatures are we before God, and yet when he passed by, and saw us polluted in our bloud, *he said unto us, live.* It is doubled, because of the strength of its nature, *it was the time of Love, very.* 8. This was love indeed, that God should take a filthy, wretched thing, and spread his skirts over it, and cover its nakedness, and swear unto it, and enter into a covenant with it, and make it his; that is, that he should espouse this loathsome thing to himself, that he would be an husband to it; this is love unfathomable, love unconceivable, self-principled love, this is the love of God to man; for God is love. Oh the depth of the riches of the bounty and goodness of God! How is his love wonderful, and his grace past finding out! How do you find and feel your hearts affected upon the report of these things? do you not see matter of admiration, and cause of wonder? Are you not, as it were, lanched forth into an Ocean of goodness, where you can see no shoar, nor feel no bottom? Ye may make a judgement of your selves by the motions and affections that ye feel in your selves at the mention of this. For thus Christ judged of the Faith

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of the Communion, that said unto him, *Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof*, Mat. 8. 8. *when Jesus heard this, he marvailed, and said to them that followed him, I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no not in Israel.* If then you feel not your souls mightily affected with this condescention of God; Say thus unto your souls, What aileth thee, O my soul, that thou art no more affected with the goodness of God? Art thou dead, that thou canst not feel? Or art thou blind, that thou canst not see thy self compassed about with astonishing goodness? Behold, the King of Glory descending from the habitation of his Majesty, and coming to visit thee; hearest not thou his voice, saying, *Open to me my sister, behold, I stand at the door and knock. Lift up your selves, O ye gates, and be ye lifted up ye everlasting doors, that the king of glory may come in.* Behold, O my soul, how he waites still, while thou hast refused to open to him! O the wonder of his goodness! O the condescention of his Love! to visit me, to sue unto me, to wait upon me, to be acquainted with me! Thus work up your souls into an astonishment at the condescention of God.

USE 2.

Secondly, Is there to be acquaintance between the soul and God? then let us learn to make a right judgement of our own Excellency; let us judge of our selves as too high and noble to converse with this base and beggerly world. I am of a nobler original, then to debase my self to such mean things; I am the off-spring of God, and shall I acquaint my self with earth? I am of

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the family of God, &c shall I converse with Satan? Is there bread enough in my Fathers house, and shall I perish for hunger? Lift up thy self, O my soul, shake off the intanglements of the flesh, break out of that bondage of the Devil, trample upon the glory of the world, and scorn to let out thy precious desires upon dung and dross, get the Moon under thy feet, cloath thy self with the Sun, put on the son of righteousness, come into the palace of God, and acquaint thy self with him; for this is thy glory, this is thy excellency. Ye precious ones, who can call God Father, and the Son Brother, who have fellowship with the Father and the Son, who may have communion with the Holy Ghost? What do you lying among the Pots? What do you raking in Dunghills? What do you conversing with the World? Have a holy scorn of these things, as below the dignity of your souls: know your worth, esteem of your selves, as of more value then all these lower Treasures. This is your glory and your excellency, that ye are of Gods acquaintance, that ye are Sons of God, Heirs of God, and joynt-Heirs with Christ, that ye understand and know God.

There are two things wherein most men are mistaken.

First, In the Nature of *Pride*. Some look upon that only as Pride, which manifesteth it self in costly Apparel, and bodily Ornaments, beyond the degree and rank of the person. Some look no further then the carriage of one man towards another. Now favourably consider with me, that the greatest Pride in the world is mans undue esteem of himself toward God; and this

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ism the heart of every one by nature. Every one by nature doth lift up himself against God, goes about to dethrone God, and to crown himself: Every one takes counsel in his heart against the Lord, saying, *Let us break his bands asunder, and cast his cords from us.* This is the voice of every one that dares wilfully to sin, *We will not have God to rule over us.* Yet this is the working of the Pride of a man against God, to thrust God out of the Throne of his Majesty, and to set himself in. For what is Gods glory and respect among his creatures? Is it not this; that he being the *beginning*, and *Author* of *all*, should be likewise the *end* of *all*? And this is the very purpose of God in making of man, that having received himself from God, he should have what he might freely give up to God; so that all man is, and all that he hath, is to be offered to God, as the end and center of all. Now a sinning creature brings God under to serve him, to provide for him. Now though this Pride of man against God be not so much taken notice of, yet it is the very daring sin of the World. It is indeed to be wondered at, that ever creatures did cast out the first thoughts of such an attempt. Now consider how far mans Pride is from his true Excellency in his Union with God. We are therefore to distinguish between that high esteem that man is to have of himself, and pride. For man to look upon himself as a *noble being*, and of a rank above all the *natural world*, it is not Pride, for thus he is (being a Spiritual understanding Agent) in a capacity of being acquainted with God, of being united to God, and, as I may say, of exchanging himself with God.

Secondly,

Secondly, Another mistake of most men, is concerning their *Dignity* and *Excellency*, and in the rule and measure of their *Excellency*. Most measure their Dignity by the advantage which they have over others in this world: As some in their Power and Authority; some in their Friends and Relations; some in their Riches and Estates; some in their Wisdom and Faculties; some in their Strength and Power. And what more universal evil is there then this, for every one in something or other to lift himself up in his own esteem, and in his thoughts to tread upon others, as something inferiour to himself? But men lie blinded in their own delusions, not considering what is the true Excellency of man; nor know the right rule by which mans worth is to be judged of. The way for us to judge rightly concerning our selves, is to see how we stand towards God. God is the perfection of excellency; and the nigher we are to God, the greater is our excellency. This is the greatness of a Nation, to be nigh to God, *Deut.* 4. 7. *What nation is there so great which hath God so nigh unto them?* And *Amos* 8. 7. God is called the Excellency of *Jacob*. God sweareth not by any thing below himself; therefore God is here meant. *Isa.* 60. 19. God is called the *Glory of his people*. *The Lord shall be to thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory*. Now God is the glory of those that are acquainted with him.

First, By vertue of the Relation wherein God stands towards them. An intimate Relation to those that are persons of Dignity & Worth, doth communicate Worth and Dignity to those who are so related to them. As the son of a mean man

is not so highly valued and esteemed as the son of a Prince. *David* reckoned it to be a great thing to be Son-in-law to a King. 1 *Sam.* 18.18. *Who am I, and what is my life, or my fathers family in Israel, that I should be son-in-law to the king?* Thus are we to reckon it our Dignity and Excellency to be in nigh relation to God, to be sons of God, to be heirs of God, and to be the friends of God; what greater honour then this to be in such a nigh relation to the God of Glory? Now the Excellency that we have from this Relation, ariseth from the Excellency of that Act which is the Foundation of this Relation, and that is our being born of God, as we are Sons, *Joh.* 1.12,13. God marrying us to himself as he is our husband. *Jer.* 3. *Turn, O backsliding children, saith the Lord, for I am married unto you.* God takes us into fellowship, & communion, and acquaintance with himself, as he makes us his friends, and his acquaintance. This act of God doth instamp a Worth and Excellency upon man, as the impression of the Kings Seal upon Wax, and makes it of value, *Rev.* 22.4. It is here spoken as the glory of the servants of God, *Those that follow the Lamb, they shall see his face, and his name shall be in their foreheads*; that is, God hath chosen, and, as it were, marked them out for his own: and this marking them, and owning them, it sets a high Dignity upon them, such as secures them from the Curse that is to be upon all besides, as *Revel.* 9.4. They are commanded to hurt none *but those who have not the seal of God on their foreheads.* This Relation of the soul to God, gives the soul an excellency, as it doth interest the soul in the glory and excellency of God himself; they are Gods, and Gods is theirs, 2 *Cor.* 6.16. *I will*

will dwell in them; and walk with them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people, ver. 17. He argues from the dignity of this relation, that they should count themselves too good to converse with the world; *Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separated, saith the Lord, and touch no unclean thing: and I will receive you, and be a father to you, and you shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord.* Thus you see the dignity that is upon the soul by its acquaintance with God. Our relation to God in our acquaintance with him, doth ennoble us, lift us above the world, make us that we are too good for the company of those that are not acquainted with God. It is then no pride in us thus to esteem of our selves, to have high thoughts of our selves, because of that acquaintance which our souls are to have with God. It is pride for to think too highly of our selves: but it is sobriety to think of our selves according to that acquaintance which we have with God, *Rom.* 12. 3. *I say, through the grace of God given to me, to every one that is among you, not to think of himself more highly then he ought to think; but to think soberly according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.* Here the Apostle commands them to measure the esteem which they have of themselves, by the measure of faith which they have from God; because by faith they come to be valued excellent in the eye of God. So likewise we are to measure our esteem which we have of our selves, by the measure of our acquaintance which we have with God: because by acquaintance with him, we come to be truly excellent. And while we do thus, we shall not think more highly of our selves then we ought to think: for

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while we account our selves excellent because of our acquaintance with God, we in lifting up our selves magnifie God; and while we thus glory, we glory in the Lord, 1 *Cor.* 1. 31. But now herein we are to beware of two things.

First, That we distinguish carefully between our capacity of being acquainted with God, and our being actually acquainted with him: for our capacity, or being so as that we may be acquainted with God, is of no worth, unless we be actually acquainted with him. We are in a remote capacity naturally as men, and we are in a more nigh capacity by the mercy and covenant of God; but this adds no true worth to the soul without the actual acquaintance of the soul with God. Yea, man is the worse for this, if he be without the other; for if man being made fit for enjoyment of God, and communion with him, never attain to an enjoyment of him, he becomes more vile then those things whose nature is inferiour, if they attain to the perfection of that nature. And it is like to fare worse with man, if he fall short of the glory of God, because he was capable of the glory of God, then with beasts which are not capable of it. And again, in regard of that more nigh capacity wherein we are by Jesus Christ of acquaintance with God, if we are not really acquainted with God, we shall thereby not only have no addition of excellency, but thereby we shall be more vile and miserable: and therefore those who through the mercy of God have been in the visible Church, and have heard of the good will of God to man through Christ, and know that God is ready to entertain them into acquaintance with himself; if they shall fall

ſhort of this, their condemnation will be greater then that of thoſe who never heard of God's invitation, and his grace in Jeſus Chriſt. If we therefore ſhall glory in our capacity of being of the acquaintance of God, and neglect to be really acquainted with him, we do but as the Jews of old, who cried out, *The Temple of the Lord are theſe, Jer.*7.4. And the nigher we are to God, if we do not come to a thorow cloſure with him, the nigher we are to the ſtroak of his wrath; for the nigher any is to Muſquet-ſhot, the greater will the force of it be upon him. Diſtinguiſh therefore between our capacity of being acquainted with God, and our actual acquaintance with him.

Secondly, We muſt beware leſt in our eſteem of our ſelves, we lay the foundation of our glory in our ſelve. There is that in every ones corrupt nature which doth provoke him to it: ſo that I dare boldly ſay, that there is not a man in his corrupt natural ſtate, who doth not ſome way or other lift up himſelf in his own eſteem for ſomthing of his own. And we are apt to make every ſpiritual excellency to be matter for pride and ſelf-conceitedneſs. We do not ſufficiently eye God as the Fountain, the Author, the Foundation, the Rule and Pattern of all our Excellency. Such is the way wherein God receiveth man to acquaintance with himſelf, that he might hide pride from his eyes, and that no fleſh might glory in his preſence, *1 Cor.*1.29. If we therefore lay the foundation of our glory in our ſelves, and pleaſe our ſelves in the ſparks that we have kindled, we ſhall glory in our ſhame, and lie down in ſorrow. This high eſteem which we are to have of

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our selves, because of our acquaintance with God; it doth not at all contradict that precious grace of humility, but they rather help forward one another: for the more any esteems of himself, because of that relation which he hath to God, the less is the esteem of himself, because of any thing of his own; the more we make God the matter of our glory, the less do we glory in our selves. The more we apprehend of our Excellency being from God, the less account do we make of all other seeming Excellencies. When the light of the Sun ariseth, then all Star-light disappears.

First, All Dignity we have, seems to arise from that relation which we have to God in acquaintance with him.

Secondly, By acquaintance with God we come to have an absolute positive Dignity which is real in our persons, yet still depending upon God. As by our union with Christ we come to have a righteousness imputed, which is our justification; and a righteousness likewise inherent, which is our sanctification; so by our acquaintance with God, we have a dignity, as it were, imputed by our relation to God, and a dignity real, which is that excellency whereby we are made absolutely better. By acquaintance with God we come to be like God; and the Image of God in us, is the greatest excellency that we are capable of. When *Moses* had been fourty days in the Mount with God, his face did shine with such a brightness, that the people could not behold him: so those that converse with God, they retain a luster, which shines in their converse with men. The image or picture of any worthy person, is esteem-

ed by them that esteem the person, and this esteem of it, is from a relation which it hath to that person; but now the children of any person whom we love, being a lively image of their fathers person, have another value upon them, having not only a relation worthy, because of their resemblance in the outward lineaments, but a real participation of nature and disposition, which they receive from their father: So there is an excellency in those that are acquainted with God, not only as being in Relation to him, but as receiving, and being partakers of the Divine Nature. As Children learn to pronounce their words according to the pronunciation of the Mother, or Nurse with whom they converse, (as every one is apt to be formed unto the manner and disposition of the company wherein they most usually are) thus those who converse with God, they become in some measure like unto God; and this is positive personal excellency which those have which converse with God. Thus the Apostle *John* argueth concerning that perfection of glory and excellency, which hereafter is to be upon those that are the Sons of God: *But it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.* In Heaven we shall be like God, because we shall see God; and on earth those that converse with God, shall in some measure be like God, according to their measure of acquaintance with him. And so *Paul* argues concerning this present life, 2 *Cor.* 3. 18. *But we all with open face beholding, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of*

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the Lord. Here we see clearly, that beholding the glory of the Lord, doth change into the same image of God, and likewise that this image of God only is the glory of man; for that is meant by, *From glory to glory*; that is, from one degree of glorious similitude, to another degree of glorious resemblance and likeness to God. Thus ye have seen that the excellency of man consisteth in his acquaintance with God; and that by the vertue of his relation to God, he hath an imputed excellency; and an excellency by his propriety in God, in whom is all excellency; and that by his converse with God, and acquaintance with him, he becomes really like God, which is his inherent excellency. Let us then reckon of our selves as those who have their Dignity and Excellency from God, and in this let us glory, That we know God, and are acquainted with God. This is the *Second Use* of this Proposition.

USE 3.

Thirdly, If man ought to be acquainted with God; then let us all enquire into our selves, whether we are acquainted with him or no. Let us every one turn into our own bosoms, and ask our selves this question; Thou hast heard, O my soul, that which is thy great Duty; that which is the very end of thy Creation, and thy Redemption, and that the highest perfection of thy noblest faculty consists in knowing God, and being acquainted with him, which contains a nigh union to him, and intimate converse with him, and mutual communion to God, and from

God, and radicated unmoveable love to God: these are excellent things. O my soul, what is thy case? Art thou one of those precious ones, which converseth oft with God, and talk oft of God, whom he will make up with his Jewels? Or art thou one of those wretched Creatures, who are alienated from the life of God, by reason of the ignorance that is in thee? Or art thou one of those who having been sometimes afar off, are now made nigh to God by the bloud of of Christ, and so are lead into fellowship and communion with the Father and the Son by the Spirit? Or art thou one of those who looks upon God afar off, and upon whom God looks afar off? I beseech you every one of you, deal seriously and accurately with your selves in this inquiry, for it is most certain that most men in the world, yea, in the visible Church, are not acquainted with God. Thus it hath been in all generations from the beginning of the world, and thus it is at this day: the people of God have been like a little flock of sheep, while the rest are like locusts, covering the whole face of the earth. The people of God have still complained that they are but as the gleaning of the vintage, and as two or three Olive-berries in the top of the utmost branches, when the rest have been gathered. The visible Church of God, in respect of the rest of the world, how small a part is it! In the visible Church how few live up to their Religion, by any considerable profession! How little difference is there between most among us, and Heathens! And of those that profess, and lay claim to something beyond others, among whom they live, how many betray their Profession by

their wicked practice and worldly conversation? So that when we have made enquiry, there will remain very few of those that are really acquainted with God; it concerns us then to be very diligent in enquiry, what is our case, how we stand toward God.

Secondly, I shall be the more earnest in pressing you upon a diligent search into what acquaintance you have gotten with God; because I know that those that have least acquaintance with God are most apt to neglect this enquiry. It may be a tender soul that hath been much with God, will be ready upon the first hint to enter into the secrets of its own heart, to look over his evidences, to call to mind, when have I drawn nigh to God? When have I conversed with God? When have I communion with God? Hath my life been a walking with God? Have I dwelt with God, and made my abode with him? Thus the soul that makes high account of its acquaintance with God, will be trying and examining itself; and it may be upon its more awakened signs of its sometimes departing from God, or feeling some present strangeness, it will be apt to conclude of it self, surely I am none of those precious ones, whose life is a converse with God. But the common generation of the world, Oh how hardly will they be brought to ask themselves this question, whether they are of the acquaintance of God or no! How often have they been urged with a great and vehement affection upon trial, how their souls stand towards God? and hitherto they have neglected it. Many are so inconsiderate as to think, what is spoken is nothing to them; they come and sit in the Con-

gregation, but their hearts are out of reach, out of the shot of the Word; so they go away, and the word to them is, as if it had not been. Many are so light, and vain, and frothy in their spirits, as that the streams will almost as soon return to their fountain, as they will be perswaded to turn in and enquire into their own souls. In all naturally there is an averseness to come to the light, that their works and hearts may be manifested. If I should come to you one by one, and beseech you with the greatest earnestness, wherewith I were able, when you go from the congregation to take opportunity to go in secret, and enter upon tryal with your hearts, and ask your selves throughly this question, and let them not alone till you have a clear determinate answer, whether you are in a state of acquaintance with God; I fear you would go, one to his pleasures, another to his vanity, and another to his covetousness, and almost all of you neglect this work of so great concernment. Let me therefore urge you with all earnestness, that you will not account it a small matter, whether you be acquainted with God or not; and so neglect this trial of your selves: But bring your hearts up roundly to the examination, yield not to their unreasonable withdrawings, force them to answer. If you make any account of the charge of God, if you make any account of the excellency of man, if you would not lose the highest priviledge of the Creature, if you have any esteem of the life of heaven, know your selves in this, whether you are in a state of acquaintance with God, and be serious and diligent in this enquiry.

Thirdly, Because men are so exceeding apt to be

be mistaken, and to misapprehend concerning themselves, that they are in a state of acquaintance with God, while they are meer strangers unto him; such as those whom our Saviour speaks of, *Matth.* 7. 22, 23. *Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name have cast out Devils, and in thy name done many wonderful works?* and then he will profess unto them, *I never knew you: depart from me ye workers of iniquity.* They take it for granted, that because of such priviledges, and gifts, and common graces which they had, therefore they were well acquainted with Christ; but our Saviour answereth, *I never knew you*; that is, I never had any acquaintance with you. Such are those who are resembled to us by five foolish Virgins, *Matth.* 25. 11. The five foolish Virgins come when the door is shut, and say, *Lord, Lord, open unto us: but he answereth, Verily I say unto you, I know you not*; that is, never had acquaintance with you: you never knew me in the time of your life, and I will not know you now: you were ashamed to own me before men, and I will be ashamed to own you before my Father. Men are so apt to be mistaken in Judgement of themselves, that they think themselves rich and encreasing with goods, and to have need of nothing, when they are wretched, miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked. And this makes *David*, *Psal.* 139. 24. to cry out after he had been trying himself, *Search me, O God, and know my heart, try me, and know my thoughts, and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.* This unaptness in us to make a right judgement of our selves in our relation to God, ariseth

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3 First, From that deep root of self-love that is in us by nature, whereby we are apt to apprehend well of our selves, and please our selves with a good conceit of our selves, though we are never so bad. And such is the nature of this affection, that it blinds our eyes, and prejudiceth the mind, that it cannot make a right judgement. As affection in some parents to their children, makes them reckon that which is a blemish, to be a beauty in their children; so doth inordinate self-love work in men, in the judgement of themselves. Men when they judge themselves, they look into a flattering glass which presents them in greater beauty then that which is their own.

Secondly, we judge amiss of our selves, because we take not a right rule for our judgements, as those whom *Paul* speaks of, 2 *Corinthians* 10. 12. *Some commend themselves, but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves with themselves, are not wise.* If we take our selves to be the rule and measure, then we cannot discern our own crookedness and irregularness.

Thirdly, We judge amiss of our selves, because of the deceitfulness of our hearts. *The heart of man is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it? Jer.* 17. 9. *Gross wickedness is apparent to the purblind eye:* but where there is an abstaining from gross outward sins, there are special workings of Corruption, such as pride, self-love, distrust of God, and love of the world; any of which shut up the soul against God, as with bolts and bars, and these lying in wait, are not discerned. Other accounts may be given of the unaptness to make a due judgement of our selves; it concerns us therefore

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to be exact in our tryal, and must not to a sudden answer; for we are ready to make a short work of it, and to save our selves the labour, and rest down with charitable thoughts of our selves. Whatsoever answer therefore our hearts give us, let us see cleared, and have such reason for it, that we may know how to proceed with our selves, upon a right judgement of our selves. The chief work of tryal in this particular acquaintance with God, will be from those particulars wherein I opened the nature of the foul acquaintance with God. Let us therefore take those heads and our own Experience of our selves, and by a rational deduction, let us find our own estate.

As thus, Those that are acquainted with God are brought nigh to God. Whereas sometimes there was a strangeness and remoteness, a vast separation, now the partition is taken out of the way, and I am made one in Christ. I have took God to be my portion, and my Father; I have been a Prodigal, and have departed from him; but I finding my self lost and undone, and that nothing could satisfie my soul in the world, therefore I resolved I would return to my Fathers house, and try if he would receive me again into his family; and so I have done. I have cast off my old converse with the world, and with corruption; I have broken my league with Hell, and have entered into a covenant with the Father, through his Son Jesus Christ; therefore I may comfortably conclude that I am now in a state of acquaintance with God.

But if in the enquiry into my self I find not these things, if I find that now I am as in former

days

days; I have felt no such change in my self, as that all things are with me as they were of old: I never was sensible of any loss in my self; I never knew what strangeness and nighness to God meant; I never understood what union with God, and distance from God was; this signifies ill, it is a symptome of a bad state, of a state of unacquaintance with God.

2. So again, for our converse with God. He that is acquainted with God, he hath had his converse with God, he hath dwelt with God, and God with him; he hath supped with Christ, and Christ with him; his great business and employment hath been nigh God, in those things wherein is most of God. If I find my soul much conversing with God, oft sending out breathings to Heaven, oft casting my eye towards God, if I find the great work of my mind to be with God, my great business lies in Heaven, my treasure is laid up there, and my thoughts, and desires, and joys, and delights, and meditations are there; I may comfortably conclude that I am in some measure acquainted with God. But if in the inquiry into my self, I find that I have my whole converse with the world, that I can afford no time for prayer to God in my family, and in secret; If I find all the day long my cares, and desires, and thoughts, run out most naturally and fully without control towards the things of the world, or that I will mind my self in a natural carnal way, and mind not the things of God; this signifies to me my unacquaintance with God, and it will be an ungrounded presumption in me to reckon of my self any other then a stranger to him.

3. So for communion and fellowship, which

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his acquaintance. Those that are intimately acquainted, their communion in the way of discourse is very frequent, in making known their thoughts and apprehensions, their fears and wants; their minds are open one to another, and that which is the propriety of one, is by their acquaintance communicated to the use of both. If then I can find in reviewing the workings of my soul, that there hath been this sight of Heaven, this Spiritual Communion between my soul and God; that my heart hath been open to God; that that I have gone to God when my heart hath been burdened with sorrow, I have discharged it into the bosom of God, as into the bosom of a friend; that in my doubts I have betaken my self to him, expecting comfort from him; that upon hearing his voice I have opened to him, and upon my opening he hath come in with smiles of love and given me tokens of his favour; these things signifie a state of acquaintance with God: but if I know not what it is to have given up my soul to God, to be his and to have taken God to be mine, if I have had experience of receiving nothing else from God, but a partaking of the things of the world; if I have not been wont to communicate the workings of my mind to God, it bewrayeth my unacquaintance with God.

4. And again, for that friendly working of love and affection in the soul towards God. Those that are in a state of acquaintance are supposed to comply with each other in kindness, and love, and good-will, and affection. If then I can upon search into my self, find that God hath the highest room in my affections, that my heart is his, that his love is prevailing with me, above the

love

love of all things beside, and that I love those that are his beloved for his sake, then I have in me a sign of real acquaintance with God: for love is the very quintessence of acquaintance: but if in the search into the workings of my mind I can find no such friendly compliance, but that God was still thwarting and crossing my designs, that I should find my self better content if there were no God, and that those workings of my mind that are about God are lower, harsh and rearing upon my spirit, then it is to be feared that I have no acquaintance with God.

And hast thou made an impartial inquiry into thy state? And how stand things between thy Soul and God? Art thou acquainted with him, or art thou not? Consider seriously, O sinners, that this is one of the weightiest questions in the world; and if this question were but well resolved, it would put an end to a thousand other questions. He that can say of God and Christ, this is my beloved, and this is my friend, he need not very solicitously ask, what news? He hath heard good news from heaven, which will easily balance all: come what will come, he need not much mind, as long as there stands that one Text in the Bible; *That all shall work together for good to them that love God.* He hath no cause to goe a begging to the world, and to say, *who will shew me any good?* As long as the Lord hath shined upon him with the light of his countenance. He need not complain, what shall I doe? I have lost this or that dear friend; when he hath found him, who can make up all with one look, whom he can never lose. In a word, he need not ask, how shall I doe to live? and what

what shall I eat, and what shall I drink, and wherewithall shall I be clothed? So long as he knows that he hath a noble friend, who will ease him of all this care, and never see him want. Well then, hast thou answered this great question or not? Or wilt thou doe by thy conscience, as *Felix* put it off, and say, thou will hear of these matters, at some more convenient season; and I wonder when that more convenient season will be; and why not now, I pray? What season more fit then the present? I am sure God saith, *Now is the accepteable time*; and doe you know better then he? What hast thou to doe that is more necessary? Speak out I pray, is the following of thy pleasures? Is the serving of Satan? Is the damning of thy Soul, more necessary then the saving of it? Is the life and death of a Soul nothing? Are everlasting glory and misery small matters? Is the love or hatred of thy God so inconsiderable a thing? Awake O sinner, what meanest thou? Arise speedily, and look about thee man. Consider seriously as thou valuest thy Soul, what best becomes a sinner in thy condition: What answer shall I return to my master? Are not these things worth the thinking of? Shall I say to all this, that thou art not at leisure to look after an interest in his favour, or any thing that tends to it? Shall I tell him that thou hast something of greater weight, and higher importance to trouble your head with? And doe you in sober sadness think so? For you make account, that excuse is sufficient? I pray then make use of it your self (for I dare not.) When God shall come to ask you, why you did no more vigorously

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mind the getting acquaintance with himself: tell him then if you think that answer will serve your turn, that you were not at leisure, you had such urgent occasions which took up the whole of your time, such and such a friend you had, who sent for you to the Tavern, and you could not possible come when he invited you, tell him if you believe that plea will hold water, that you would have been glad to have come upon his invitation, but that you were taken up with such good old friends, the World, the Flesh, and the Devil. How doe you think such an answer will be taken? You may think to put us off with such kind of reason as this: but do you hope by this answer to satisfie your Judge? Believe it sinner, God will not thus be put off. Wherefore I do again with all the earnestness I can for my soul renew my suit to thee, that thou wouldst act like a man in his wits, make some serious inquiry into the state and condition of thy soul. And consider for the Lords sake again and again, before you send me away thus, what errand I come to you on: It is to treat with you about a rich match for thy poor undone soul: therefore consider well what you do before you make light of this business; and know when you are well offered; believe it, God will not long send after you in this manner, and you are not like every day to have such proffers; Divine Patience and Goodness will not always plead at this rate with you; God will ere long say, let them alone: the Lord will ere long speak to scornful sinners in such language that will make their ears to tingle; he will deal fiercely as well as they: and who is like to have the worst of it at last?

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I have to any rational man to judge. The time is coming, when your ungodly hearts shall ake to see him whom you might have had for your husband; when you shall have him for your judge, whom you might have had for your Advocate. And though we could not get you to be willing to be acquainted with him, no, not so much as to have any serious thoughts about it, or to make any enquiry after him to inform your self concerning him; yet you shall have him for your enemy whether you will or no. But O let us not part thus! let me, a man like thy self, reason the case a little more with thee; come tell me poor ignorant creature, thou that still standest demurring, and sayst, Shall I, shall I? what evil is there in thy God, that thou shouldest be thus hardly brought, so much as to discourse this business with thy own soul? What is the reason that thou scarce thinkest it worth the while to trouble thy head about any thing that doth concern your interest in his love? Thou that mindest his love so little, tell me what dost thou think had become of thee long before this, if God had regarded thee as little as thou dost him? What wouldest thou have done, had the Lord said to any Disease, the least of his Messengers, fetch that Rebel before me, that values not my favour; he shall know what my anger is, seeing he will not prize my love. O what a lamentable case hadst thou been in, had God but done by thee as thou hast by him? *Acquaintance with God!* methinks sinful man should stand and wonder at such a word; methinks he should be even surprized with an extasie of admiration, and say, and will God indeed be acquainted with

such a Worm, such a dead Dog, such a Rebel as I? *Lord, what is man that thou art mindful of him, or the son of man, that thou shouldest make such an offer to him?* One would think thou shouldest no more dispute the matter then *Esther* did, when that great Monarch made her his Queen. Were it but in sensible things, that nothing near such an offer were made (which is impossible) man would think the very questioning in such a case a strange folly. One would think that every one of Gods enemies that have been in open Rebellion against him, and are utterly unable to make their part good against him, when they hear of such tearms of mercy from their Prince, who hath all their lives in his hand, should rejoyce at this news, and say, *How beautiful are the feet of them which bring such tidings?* How did *Benhadad* look, when instead of a Halter he had a Coach? When instead of Rebel, he herd Brother? Whatever we may think of these things, *David* thought it high time for him to bid such a Messenger welcome, and to open his heart for the receiving his God: Hear what he saith to his own heart and others, *Psal.* 24. *Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lifted up ye everlasting doors, that the king of glory may come in.* And because the door of mens hearts is lock'd and barr'd, and bolted, and men are in a deep sleep, and will not hear the knocking that is at the gate, though it be loud, though it be a King; therefore *David* knocks again, *Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lifted up ye everlasting doors*: Why, what haste, saith the sinner? What haste? Why, here's the King at your Gates; and that not an ordinary King neither, he is a glorious King that will honour you

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so far, if you open quickly, as to lodge within, to take up his abode in your house, to dwell with you: but the soul for all this doth not yet open, but stands still questioning, as if it were an enemy, rather than a friend that stood there, and asks, who is this *King of glory*? Who? he answers again, *he is the Lord of hosts*; he, that if you will not open quickly and thankfully, can easily pull your house down about your ears. He is the Lord of Hosts, that King who hath a mighty Army always at his command, who stand ready for their Commission, and then you should soon know who it is you might have had for your friend; *Lift up therefore your heads, O ye gates*; open quickly ye that had rather have God for your friend then for your enemy. O why should not the soul of every sinner cry out, Lord, the Door is locked and thou hast the key, I have been trying what I can do, but the Wards are so rusty that I cannot possibly turn the Key, but Lord, throw the Door off the Hinges, any thing in the world, so thou wilt but come in and dwell here: Come, O mighty God, break through Doors of Iron, and Bars of Brass, and make way for thy self by thy love and power. Come, Lord, and make thy self welcome, all that I have is at thy service: O for my soul to entertain thee! But where is the sinner that is in this here? How seldom do poor Creatures desire Gods company, or bewail his absence? Where almost are the men and women to be found, that do in good earnest long to be acquainted with God? Men are naturally strangers to God, and it is a wonderful difficult thing to perswade men to enter into so much as a serious deliberate consideration of

these things. Though it be so in fact by for their interest; though the God that made them, out of pity to their souls desires it; though he send his Embassadours in his name to beseech them to be reconciled unto God, against whom they have been in open arms; though in infinite mercy he perswade them to lay down their weapons, and promise them free and General Pardon, and to receive them into favour, and to forget and forgive; yet where is the sinner almost to be found that with any thankfulness doth close with these offers? Now it being a business of such infinite concernment, and it being the very work and business of a Minister of Christ to bring God and man into union, to get man acquainted with God. I shall in the next place labour to inforce this Exhortation upon the hearts of sinners, and do what I can possible to prevail with them that are as yet strangers, to get acquainted with God, that they may have peace, and that thereby good might come unto them.

EXHORTATION.

Once more, o for sinners, That God which can in a moment stop thy breath, and send thee into Hell, doth offer to be friends with thee. If thou wilt come upon his invitation, well and good; thou art a happy man for ever: if not, thou wilt rue the day that ever thou were born: yet, through mercy the matter is not gone so far, but that thou mayest (if you will now at last in good earnest humble thy self to him) be received into favour. Behold, a Pardon, Mercy, and Grace to stand astonished, O ye Heavens, at this infinite con-

condescention, wonder O ye Angels, and pry into this kindness. Was there ever such condescention, love, and goodness heard of? If thou dost but understand, O stupid sinner, what an offer is made to thee, thou couldest not but adore that goodness that can pardon and forget such offences, and receive such a Creature into favour; thou wouldest also cry out with as great admiration as he did; *what manner of love!* you would think it a mercy not to be paralell'd, a kindness never to be forgotten, a proposal by no means to be refused. Now that I may, if possible, prevail with some that are yet afar off, to come near, I shall enforce this Exhortation with many powerful Motives, the least of which (were men but well in their wits as to Spiritual matters, were the world not to a wonder fools, in the great affairs of their souls and eternity) might easily prevail. O that I might prevail! O that some might be perswaded! O that God would put life and power into these words, that they might prove effectual to the intended ends! O that some poor rebellious sinners might be made to close with the most advantagious offers that ever were, or could be made to Creatures in our condition!

MOTIVES.

The first *Kind* of *Motives* that I shall insist upon to inforce this *Exhortation*, shall be taken from the nature of the Person that I would have you acquainted with. Consider well what kind of friend you are like to have of him; and if, after you have well weighed what I shall (with Gods mind

leave) say, you can find out any one in Heaven or in Earth that will be a better friend to you and stand you in more stead; if in all the world you bring one that deserves better at your hands, and is more worthy of your choicest love, and acquaintance, if I bid you to your loss; why then let me bare the blame of a Cheater for ever. And if after trial, thorow trial, and intimate acquaintance, you find your self deceived, and that it was not worth the while to give your self so much trouble, why then let me be branded to Eternity for the veriest Lyar and Impostor in the world. For my part, I envy not men their happiness, but I wish with all my heart, that men would do that which may be most for their interest. It was the counsel of *Epictetus*, none of the weakest men, though a Heathen, *Make choice of that which is really most Excellent; and if there be a Friend to be found better then thy God, the first thing thou dost get an interest in him.* But consider whether there be not a contradiction in the tearms, *Better then the best*; it's perfect nonsense. I know it's impossible for any one that hath right apprehensions of God to undervalue him Wherefore it is a grand piece of Religion, to have clear apprehensions of God; such can't but believe him to be infinitely Lovely, Wise, and Powerful, and to be obeyed in all things; and all the reason in the world to acquiesce in his will, who is so good and so wise; such will place happiness in nothing below his favour. Wherefore I think *Plutarch* was not mistaken, who affirmed, *That mans life was given him of God, only to get the knowledge of God.* But I shall be a little more particular in speaking to the excellent qualifications of

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him, whom I would fain get every poor ſinner acquainted with.

Firſt, He is the moſt loving and kind friend. Poor ignorant Creatures that are ſtrangers to him, they talk at a mad rate concerning him: thoſe that know him not will be ſpeaking bad, and thinking worſe of him; but, O did they but know what God is to them that are acquainted with him, had they but converſed with him themſelves, did they but ſee what entertainment he gives, had they but been in his company, and experienced what ſome have experienced, had they but beheld how affectionately he imbraces them which come to him; they would quickly ſay that it was a falſe report, and wicked ſcandal, that the Devil and the World, which know not God, had raiſed of him, they would ſoon cry out, that they would not for a world but that they had been at his houſe, and that they have cauſe to bleſs God for the day that ever they knew ſuch and ſuch who brought them acquainted with ſuch a friend; they will never while they live, for the future, believe any thing that is ſpoken againſt God or Chriſt, let who will ſpeak it. Is this the God they had ſuch hard thoughts of? Is this the kindneſs that they did ſo ſlight? Is this the friend that they were ſo loath to come to? And thus an ingenious ſoul will even be aſhamed that it ſhould ever harbour ſuch low thoughts of him, whom now to their comfort they have found beyond apprehenſion kind. Believe it Sirs, you can't conceive what a friend you ſhall have of God, would you but be perſwaded to enter into Covenant with him, to be his, wholly his; I tell you many, that did

ſometimes think, and do as you do now, that in-
ſet light by Chriſt and hate God, and ſaw no
lovelineſs in him, are now quite of another
mind, they would not for ten thouſand worlds
quit their intereſt in him. O who dare ſay that
he is a hard maſter? Who that knows him
will ſay he is an unkind friend? O what do poor
creatures ail that they do entertain ſuch harſh,
ſowr thoughts of God? What, do you think
there is nothing in that Scripture, *Pſal.* 31. 19.
*O how great is thy goodneſs which thou haſt laid up for
them that fear thee!* Doth the *Pſalmiſt* ſpeak too
largely? Doth he ſay more then he and others
could prove? Ask him, and he will tell you in
verſ. 21. that he bleſſeth God theſe were things
he could ſpeak to, from his own perſonal expe-
rience, and many thouſands as well as he, to
whom the Lord had ſhewed his marvellous kind-
neſs; and therfore he doth very paſſionately plead
with the people of God to love him, and more
highly to expreſs their ſenſe of his goodneſs, that
the world might be encouraged alſo to have
good thoughts of him. What Nation under
Heaven can ſay they have not taſted of his good-
neſs, *Pſal.* 33. 5. *All the earth is full of the goodneſs of
the Lord.* Read over the hundred forty fifth
Pſalm, and let us hear then what you have to ſay
againſt God. Some indeed may ſpeak of the might
of Gods terrible acts; ſome that have deſpiſed
his love, have felt his power and juſtice; as for
theſe we cannot think them competent Judges
in this caſe, they will not, it may be, commend
Gods goodneſs: yet even they cannot, will not
condemn God of injuſtice, but exclaim againſt
themſelves for their unſpeakable folly in flight-

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ing his kindness when it was tendered to them. But as for others, ask them, and they will declare the goodness of God, they will abundantly utter the memory of his great goodness, and sing of his righteousness. Do but try poor sinner, do but try, come a little nearer, and believe your own experience; and if after a thorow knowledge of God, and a real acquaintance with him, you can say that his favour is not to be sought after, his love not worth the desiring; why then I have done, I have no more to say. I am sure if God were as the Devil and the world represent him to be; in so many thousands of years, among so many thousands and millions that have been acquainted with him, and entertained by him, some of them would have complained before this, we should at one time or other have heard something against him. Now I challenge all the world to produce me but an experienced solid Saint, that when he acted like himself, and after he had been in the company of God, and had been feasted by him, could say that he kept a short house, especially could we but enquire of those that sit down at his Table, and are always in his presence; which of them all have a word to say against him? but of that more hereafter. No no it is in sinners themselves, there lies the fault: they believe the malicious father of lyes, they easily credit the unexperienced ignorant world, and how little reason you have to believe so malicious enemies before the Word of Truth, I leave your selves to determine. O why will you take up a slander against your Creator so easily? Why will you receive such great things wherein your eternal welfare is con-

concerned upon truſt? Do but ſearch diligently, turn over the Bible, conſult the experiences of wiſer men, and ſee whether things be not as I tell you. And how doth the matter ſtand now poor heart? what muſt the Devil be believed before God? what is God a hard maſter ſtill? of all the Creatures in the world, ſome of you have little reaſon to ſay ſo. Haſt thou not been fed, cloathed, & delivered a thouſand times by him? Who is it that provided ſo richly for you? Who filled your barns? Who reſtored your health at ſuch and ſuch a time, when the Doctor gave you over? Was that one of his unkindneſſes? Are theſe the things for which you ſlight him? God himſelf makes a challenge in *Jer.* 2. 5. *What iniquity have your fathers found in me, that they are gone far from me, and have walked after vanity, and become vain? neither ſaid they, Where is the God that brought us out of the land of Egypt, and led us through the wilderneſs, through a land of deſert and pits, through a land of drought, and of the ſhadow of death, where no man dwelt: and I brought you into a plentiful country, to eat the fruit thereof, and the goodneſs thereof, and yet you know not me, ſaith the Lord.* Was there ever ſuch ingratitude heard of? *Paſs yee over the Iſles of Chittim, and ſend unto Kedar, and conſider diligently, and ſee if there be ſuch a thing: hath a nation changed their gods? but my people have changed their glory for that which doth not profit.* And what ſayſt thou, O ungrateful *Iſrael*? have the Heathens more reaſon to cleave to their idols? Are the Pagans more beholding to their ſtocks and ſtones then thou art to the living God? And now what haſt thou got by all this? haſt thou increaſed thy riches? Are thy barns more full of Corn? Are there ever

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the more Cattel in thy Pastures? Are thy Presses more full of Grapes? Art thou not now grown poor? Is not the Heaven become as Brass, and the Earth as Iron? Do not thy Cattel groan for want of food? Are not thy Vines and Fields grown barren? Why, you may thank your selves for all this; you did not know when you were well. Return therefore, O backsliding *Israel*, and thou shalt know the difference between my service, and the service of Devils, *Jer.* 2. 30, 31. Let me therefore again plead with thee, O God-despising sinner. If for all this thou wilt not be perswaded, let me expostulate the case with thee, as God did with *Israel*. Did not God bring thee into a world every way furnished for thy use? Hath he not subjected the Creatures of the world to thee? Who waters thy Fields out of his treasuries? Who opens the clods of the Earth, and sends thee out of his store-house provisions year by year? What would quickly become of thee, if thou hadst not a fresh supply from him every year, nay, every moment? O, is this his unkindness for which thou hatest him? And is it for this that thou hast such sower thoughts of him? And if all this were too little, he would do greater things then these; hath he not sent his Son out of his bosom? Doth he not offer thee Heaven and Glory? What canst thou in reason ask, that is good for thee, that he would deny thee, if thou wouldst but be acquainted with him? And if this be an unkind friend, I do not know who is kind: if this be not love, I know not what is. What could he have done more to express his love to the world then he hath done, *Isa.* 4. 4. Ask *David* what he thinks of God,

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he was well acquainted with him, he dwelt in his house, and by his good will would he never out of his more immediate presence, and company: enquire, I pray, what he found amiss in him? That you may know his mind the better, he hath left it upon Record in more then one or two places, what a friend he hath had of God, *Psal.* 16.6. *The lines are fallen to me in pleasant places: yea, I have a goodly heritage.* Why, what is that you boast of so much, O *David*? have not others had Kingdoms as well as you? No, that's not the thing, a Crown is one of the least Jewels in my Cabinet, *The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance, and of my cup.* So in *Psal.* 23. quite through. Nay, doth he not sometimes come out and beckon to the poor beggarly starved world, to come and eat their fill of the same dish; *O taste and see that the Lord is good*, Psal. 34. 8. If you will give any credit to his word, he will tell you, *No friend like to God, Psal.* 73.25, 26, 27, 28. *Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none in earth that I can desire besides thee. My flesh and my heart faileth, but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever. For lo, they that are far from him shall perish: Thou hast destroyed all them that go a whoring from thee; but it is good for me to draw near to God.* Let others think, or do as they please, as for him he values *the light of Gods countenance above corn, and wine, and oyl, Psal.* 4.6, 7. 1 *Joh.* 3.1. *Cant.* 1.4. And what sayst thou now poor creature? Art thou still of the same mind? Wilt thou have God for thy God and Friend, or no? Is he good and kind, or not? Is his favour worth the desiring and seeking after? *Psal.* 94.8. *Understand O ye brutish among the people, and ye fools when will ye be wise?* If

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God himself may not be believed, if David his servant may not be credited, hear what one of your brethren, a Heathen I mean, saith in this case. I shall translate his words into English, they are as follows. *The goodness and providence of God is such as is great, that if we are all dumb mute, he would do nothing publickly nor privately, but praise God, and speak well of his name,* &c. Epic. l. 1. c. 16. Doth it not become man, while he is plowing, and digging, and eating, &c. to be singing. *Great is that God that hath given us hand to fit instruments to work with, great is that God who hath given us hands and feet, and other members, above all, that he hath given us an understanding soul.* And seeing most men are blind in these things, is it not fit that some that are more wise and able should publickly praise God for all these things? and now I am a lame old man, but partaker of Reason, God is to be praised by me, this is my work, and this I will do, and I will not leave this station as long as I live; and I wish that all the world would joyn with me in singing a song of thankfulness to this good God. Hear what a testimony he gives of the goodness of God; Hark how he invites you to joyn in that sweet consort of singing praises to your Maker! hark at what a rate he talks, that never read a Bible, or heard of a Christ, or knew what this acquaintance with God that I am speaking of, meant: how bravely doth he set out the goodness of God? What say you? will you yet be perswaded to think well of God? Methinks I am loath to see my good master thus slighted and undervalued: methinks it grieves me to see thee too, so foolishly to refuse such an offer. I shall conclude what I have to say upon

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this head, with another double expression of the same divine and Godadmiring Strickland saw [illegible] would study the nature of things, and had the grateful minde, that might see cause to admire, and praise God from every creature in the world. It is not therefore because God hath no goodness or beauty in him, that men do no more earnestly desire acquaintance with him; but because their eyes are shut, or they look upon him through a wrong perspective. This is the first qualification of the Friend, which may commend his acquaintance to you, that he is the most loving and good Friend.

Secondly, He is a most comfortable Friend. It is a vulgar, and yet a dangerous error, which the Devil would fain keep up the credit of, That a Religious life is a sad, melancholy, pensive life; and that upon our acquaintance with God, we must bid an everlasting farewel to joy, pleasure, and comforts. And is it true, that a Christians life is so uncomfortable a life? What then doth *David* mean to take his Harp so oft in his hand? What makes him so frequently to warble out those melodious Notes? How seldom is his Violon out of tune? Why is he so oft singing and rejoycing? Read the last *Psalme* at your leisure, and then tell me whether that be the language of a sad mournful melancholy man? Do you never hear him speak of God, his exceeding joy? Doth he not tell God plainly sometimes, that he can scarce eat of any thing but that which comes from his Table? Nothing else can comfort him. Hence it is in *Psal.* 119. 76, 77. that he puts up this earnest request to God; *Let I pray thee, thy merciful kindness be for my comfort.*

As for his part he could take comfort in nothing below that, and that was it that the Lord had graciously promised to feed his servant with, as long as he lived; whereupon he urges God with his promise, *According to thy word unto thy servant*, And that none might think this to be only Gods common kindness that he means, he adds, *Let thy tender mercies come unto me, that I may live*. Gods common mercies would not serve his turn, that was a Dish that the World fed upon as well as he; if he might not have these sweet dainties, peculiar, spiritual, fatherly mercies, he could not live, he should even pine away for hunger. Wherefore he saith a little after, *Mine soul did even faint for Gods salvation*. And the soul that hath had a full meal here; O how is it raised? How doth it cry roast-meat, *Cant. 4. 1. The King hath brought me into his chambers*; and what had you there? nay, that's more than the soul can express; only this she can say, *The taste of that mercy, she hopes to keep in her mouth for ever; she shall remember his love more then wine*. Nay, so comfortable a Friend is God, that those who have an interest in him can rejoyce in such times, when others would be weeping and wringing their hands. Gods company is so refreshing, that it turns a prison into a palace; it brings joy and pleasure into a dungeon. Stand forth, O ye suffering Saints, and speak your experiences; the world objects your state to us as a sad state, and they think you have good reason to accuse God, and if any have any thing to say against the comfortableness of a religious life, and this friend, it is you. Well then, will you promise, O sufferers, to stand to the judgement of the greatest sufferers?

sufferers. VVe will enquire of them that have been sawn asunder, tormented, roasted for Gods sake; look into that little *Book of Martyrs*, and you shall find as uncomfortable as their state was, yet they would not accept of deliverance; none of them all that would open his mouth against this Friend for all this. VVhat say you, O *Paul* and *Silas*, now your backs are raw, and your feet are in the stocks? their singing speaks significantly enough for them that they were not over sad; and they are so busie in crying *Hallelujahs*, that they can't attend to give an answer to so sorry a question. VVhat say the *Martyrs* out of the Flames. Doth not their love burn as hot then as ever? Did ever any of them from *Abel* to the least that suffered in Christs cause, say that God was an uncomfortable Friend? Do not all the children of *Wisdom* from first to last justifie *Wisdom*, and say, *That all her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths, peace?* Of those that have God for their Friend and know it, bring me any of them all that complains of God. How doth he come and chear them up when all the world is against them? *Joh.* 16. 33. VVhat made that Holy Man in *Psal.* 23. say, *That though he should walk through the valley of the shadow of death he would fear no evil.* VVhat, not fear then? VVhy, what Friend is it that keeps up your spirits? that bares you company in those black and dismal Regions; he will soon tell you God was with him, and in those slippery ways he lean'd upon his staff, and these were the Cordials that kept his heart from fainting. I challenge all the Gallants in the world out of all their Merry Jovial Clubs, to find such a company of merry cheatful

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Creatures as the friends of God are. 'Tis not the company of God, but the want of it that makes sad. Alas, you know not what their comforts be; and strangers intermeddle not with their joy. You think they can't be merry when their countenance is so grave, but they are sure you can't be truly merry when you smile with a curse upon your souls. They know that he spoke that sentence who could not be mistaken, *Prov.* 14. 13. *Even in laughter the heart is sorrowful, and the end of that mirth is heaviness.* Then call your roaring, and your singing, and laughter mirth; but the Spirit of God calls it madness, *Eccl.* 2. 2. When a carnal mans heart is ready to die within him, and with *Nabal* to become like a stone; how chearfully then can those look that have God for their friend! Which of the valiant ones of the world can outface Death, look joyfully into Eternity? Which of them can hug a Faggot, embrace the Flames? This the Saint can do, and more too; for he can look infinite Justice in the face with a chearful heart, he can hear of Hell with joy and thankfulness, he can think of the day of Judgment with great delight and comfort. I again challenge all the world to produce one out of all their merry Companies, one that can do all this; come muster up all your jovial Blades together; call for your Harps and Viols, add what you will to make the consort compleat; bring in your richest Wines; come lay your heads together, and study what may still add to your comfort: well, is it done? Now come away sinner, this night thy soul must appear before God. Well now, what say you man? What, doth your courage fail you? Now call for your merry

Companions, and let them cheat thy heart. Now call for a Cup, a VVhore, never be daunted man; shall one of thy courage quail, that could make a mock at the threatnings of the Almighty God? what so boon and jolly but now, and now down in the mouth? Here's a sudden change indeed! Where's thy merry companions, I say again? all fled! Where are thy darling pleasures? have all forsaken thee? Why should'st thou be dejected, there's a poor man in rags that's smiling? What, art thou quite bereft of all comfort? What's the matter man? What's the matter? There's a question with all my heart, to ask a man that must appear before a God to morrow morning. Well then, it seems your heart misgives you; what then did you mean to talk of joy and pleasures? are they all come to this? VVhy, there stands one that now hath his heart as full of comfort as ever it can hold; and the very thoughts of Eternity, which do so daunt your soul, raise his; and would you know the reason? he knows he is going to his friend, nay, his friend bares him company thorow that dirty Lane. Behold, how good and how pleasant a thing it is for God and the soul to dwell together in unity! This 'tis to have God for a friend: *O blessed is the soul that is in such a case; yea, blessed is the soul whose God is the Lord,* Psal. 144. 15. Psal. 69. 15, 16. 2 Cor. 1. 2. Joh. 14. 16. Isa. 51. 11. 12. Neh. 8. 10. Psal. 30. 5. Psal. 45. 7. Prov. 14. 10. Isa. 29. 19. Rom. 14. 17. 1 Pet. 1. 8. Nay, *David* when he seem'd to be somewhat out of tune, leaves this upon Record as undoubted truth, *Psal.* 73. 1. *That God is good to Israel, even to such as are of a clean heart*; Let the Devil and

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his Instruments say what they will to the contrary, I will never believe them; I have said it before, and I see no reason to reverse my sentence; Truly God is good. Though sometimes he may hide his face for a while, yet he doth that in faithfulness, and love; there is kindness in his very scourges, and love bound up in his rods; he is good to *Israel*: do but mark it first or last, *The true Israelite in whom there is no guile, shall be refreshed by this Saviour.* The *Israelite* that wrestles with tears with God, and values his love above the whole world, that will not be put off without his Fathers blessing, he shall have it with a witness; *He shall reap in joy, though he may at present sow in tears. Even to such as are of a clean heart.* The false hearted hypocrite indeed, that gives God only his tongue and lip, cap and knee, but reserves his heart and love for sin and the world, that hath much of complement, but nothing of affection and reality; why, let such a one never expect, while in such a state, to taste those reviving comforts that I have been treating of: while he drives such a trade, he must not expect much of Gods company; but of that hereafter. What a charge doth God give to his Ministers to keep up the spirits of his people, *Comfort ye, comfort ye my people,* saith their God, *speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem.* It's a gross mistake, to think that God loves to see his droopings and hanging down their heads; no, no, he counts it his honour to have his servants chearful. O why then should any of the precious sons and daughters of *Zion* walk up and down, as if their friends company were not sufficient to solace them, even in the lowest state that a child of

God can be conceived to be in. While you think God is honoured by you, you can't imagine what wrong you do him. The world ſtands by and looks upon you, the Devil bids them look on ſtill, and aſks them, how they like ſuch a dumpiſh life, and the ſervice of ſuch a Maſter, all whoſe ſervants and friends lead ſuch a doleful life. Stay, hold there Satan, that's a lye, and a loud one too; there are and have been thouſands of Gods Children that have lived, as it were in the Suburbs of Heaven, while they have been upon Earth; many thouſands there have been, that have ſpent their days in true ſolid joy and peace; many that have gone from one Heaven of comfort here, to another of glory and comfort in that other world. As I ſaid before, ſo I ſay again, It is not the company of God, but the want of it, makes thoſe ſad which you ſee ſo; beſides, let me tell you, tears and joy are no way inconſiſtent. It may be alſo thoſe tears, that ſad countenance may be for thy ſake; when he ſees what comfort thou deſpiſeſt, and knows what a God, what a Friend thou refuſeſt, he can't but weep; it's no rarity for the people of God in the midſt of their ſpiritual enjoyments to pity poor fooliſh ſinners, that ſlight thoſe things which they know to be ſo refreſhing: Thus *David* did when his heart was ſolaced with the love of God, when his ſoul was ready to be over-burdened, overpowered with the abundant incomes of Gods kindneſs, he can't but with grief and pity think of their ſtate, who have nothing to live upon but huſks, whileſt he feeds thus high. O let my ſoul be but acquainted with God, let me but taſte more of thoſe true comforts, drink of that

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river of pleasures that is at his right hand, and then I could spare these lower sensual pleasures, then I should scarce envy the most merry ranting Blades their comforts; I will not say but then I should with sorrow think of their wants. It was spoken by *Galeacius Caraxiola*, one that sometimes had none of the least shares of worldly enjoyments, and might have had more, could he have dispensed with the absence of this friend, could he but have been willing to have wanted those spiritual comforts. *Let him perish that values not one hours communion with God, and the comforts of a divine life, above all the pleasures and comforts that the earth can afford.* Give me such comforts, such a friend, whose smiles may refresh me upon a death-bed, whose presence may revive me when nothing else can. *Naturalists* tell us of a Bird call'd *Charadius*, that being brought into the room where any one lieth sick, if he look upon the sick person with a fixed eye, he recovereth, but if he turn away his eyes, the person dies. It is true, I am sure, of this friend, in whose favour is life, and in whose frowns there is death. [*Arist. Ethic. l. 3. cap. 24.*] *Can you help me to such a friend?* (may all say with as good reason as he) *that can keep me from all fears.* O for such a friend! This is instead of all pleasures to me, to think that God is my Father, and to know that I have loved and obeyed him to the utmost of my power, not only in words but in deeds; this, this is the pleasure, here's a friend indeed. Now what do you say to all this, is God to be desired? Is his acquaintance to be sought after? Can such a friend be too much valued? The truth of it is, I would not give a rush for any of your comforts which come

not from a ſenſe of our intereſt in Chriſt, and which have not a ſolid foundation, Scripture-conſolations. It is not he that ſmiles, but he that can look up to God as his, and look into his ſoul, and ſee things therein a good compoſure, and kept in a chearful ſubjection to his Maker and Redeemer; this, this is the ſtate, here dwells joys, and comforts that deſerve ſuch a name. This lower Region ſometimes is ſtormy, but above there is a conſtant calm. *Sen.* And is God ſtill to be ſlighted? are his favours, is his acquaintance little worth? I know you can't be an enemy to comforts and joys; why, let me tell you here's the Well of Conſolation, here's the Fountain, and all other joys which are drawn out of the Ciſterns will ere long be dry. Come away therefore, poor ſoul, and do not refuſe ſuch joys as all the carnal world can't parallel for their hearts. And this is the next *Motive*, taken from the conſideration of the Nature of this Friend, which I would perſwade you to get acquainted with.

Firſt, He is a loving and kind Friend.

Secondly, He is the moſt chearing, comforting Friend.

Thirdly, He is the moſt able and powerful Friend. He hath all power in his hand; and as long as he is but thy Friend, who ere is thy Foe, thou ſhalt never be overpowred, never be cruſhed. Thou mayſt challenge all the Devils in Hell, and all his inſtruments upon earth to do their worſt, God is on thy ſide, thou needſt not fear. Thou art in thy ſelf a poor weak Creature, eaſily conquered and broken by a thouſand enemies; but if thou haſt a God to fly to, thou alſo mayeſt

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ſing as well as theſe did, *Iſa.* 26. 1. *Thou alſo haſt a ſtrong City, Salvation hath God appointed for walls and bulwarks.* Thy enemies may rage indeed, they may threaten, but that's all; the Dogs may bark, but they cannot bite. Should all the Kings of the world muſter up their forces, and be led into the field by that great and politick warrier, the Prince of darkneſs; ſhould they all reſolve they will ſit down before this City and block it up; ſhould they raiſe their Engines, and mount their beſt Artillery; ſhould they diſcharge their mighty Volleys; ſhould they reſolve to proſecute their helliſh deſigns to the utmoſt, and attempt to ſtorm this City, may not the inhabitants ſit down with ſcorn, and pity them which are ſo prodigal of the bloud of ſouls; would it not be as fruitleſs a project, as if they ſhould endeavour to ſcale the Clouds, and to pluck the Sun out of the Firmament, and to dethrone the Almighty. For God himſelf is in the midſt of her; and if Omnipotence can protect her, if Salvation it ſelf can ſecure her, ſhe need not be afraid; every Denizen in that City hath an intereſt in that great General the Lord of Hoſts, who can muſter a thouſand thouſand Souldiers at a moments warning; and if they be too few, he hath ten thouſand times ten thouſand at his command, all of them expert Warriers, and able to lead an Army: the leaſt of them with the Generals Commiſſion would not turn his back to the greateſt force that all his Enemies can poſſibly raiſe; how ſafe then muſt he be that hath ſuch a Guard? how unlike is he to be overcome that hath ſuch a Defence? *The gates of Hell ſhall never prevail againſt him.* The God of Heaven is on his

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ſide, the Almighty is up in Arms in his defence, the Lord of Hoſts is for him. It is he that made proud *Pharaoh* to ſtoop, it's he who made a path for his in the midſt of the mighty waters, it's he who led his by the hand of *Moſes* and *Aaron* through the Red Sea, it's he who look'd the *Egyptians* into Confuſion, and made their Captains and Princes to quake, who died the Sea again with the bloud of thoſe cruel oppreſſours: This is our God in whom we have truſted, this is he who is able to ſave to the uttermoſt thoſe that come under the ſhadow of his wings for ſhelter. O who would not love thee, O God, who that knows thee, would not be willing to have ſuch a friend, in whoſe Court there is ſure protection from all the ſons of violence, none of his favourites need fear an arreſt, *Pſal.* 27. 3, 4. *The Lord is my light and my ſalvation: of whom ſhall I be afraid? the Lord is the ſtrength of my life: whom ſhould I fear? when the wicked, even my enemies and my foes came upon me to eat up my fleſh, they ſtumbled and fell: though an hoſt ſhould encamp againſt me, my heart ſhall not fear: though war ſhould riſe againſt me, in this will I be confident.* No wonder then that he counts it infinitely for his intereſt, to keep his League with God; no marvel he counts this his beſt hold, his one thing neceſſary, *verſ.* 4. *One thing have I deſired of the Lord, that will I ſeek after, that I may dwell in the houſe of God all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in his Temple; for in the time of trouble he ſhall hide me in his Pavillion, in the ſecret of his Tabernacle ſhall he hide me, he ſhall ſet me up upon a Rock: and now ſhall mine head be lifted up above mine enemies round a*

It was a Heathen that ſaid, *There is no*

tification then the love of the Citizens, Seneca. He had spoke to much better purpose, and more truth, had he said, *There can be no surer fortification then the love of God.* Hear how the Apostle boasts, when he is quartered in this Garrison; *I can do all through Christ that strengtheneth me; yet not I, but Christ that dwelleth in me.* O how safe must he needs be that hath Almighty Power for his guard. And this is the condition of every soul that hath acquaintance with God; he hath an able Friend: behold him marching out in Majesty, and challenging all the world to compare with him, *Isa.* 40. 16, &c. *To whom will ye liken God? or what likeness will ye count unto him? Who among the sons of the mighty dare shew his head when he appears? Who is there that is a match for him? where is the man that thinks himself able to grapple with the Almighty? stand forth thou valiant Champion, gird up thy loyns like a man, and shew thy Power and Majesty: hast thou an arm like God? or canst thunder with a voice like him? Deck thy self now with glory and excellency, and array thy self with Majesty and Beauty, cast abroad the rage of thy wrath, and behold every one that is proud, and abase him; look on every one that is proud and bring him low, and tread down the wicked in their place, hide them in the dust together, and bind their faces in secret: then will I confess unto thee, that thine own right hand can save thee.* Alas the poor worm shrinks, the thunder of Gods voice makes him tremble, one glance of his glorious face makes daring man to eat his words, and quake. You see then, O sinner, how they are like to fare that enter into the Lists against him, and rush upon the thick bosses of his Buckler. Chear up, O Christian, the very looks of thy Captain will make thine enemies like dead

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men. Thou canst never be brought into such a condition, as that thou shalt be beyond the help of him whose power is infinite. Who would have thought but that *Israel* was a lost people, when *Pharaoh* was behind them with a huge Army bravely harnessed, and the Sea before, Mountains, Deserts and Enemies on each side of them? and yet even then the Lord lets *Israel* and *Egypt* too know what it is to have a living God for them. What a low condition were the people of God in *Hamans* time, when that wicked Decree was passed, and they look like them whom it was next to impossible to save: and yet their mighty friend did deliver them from that death too. Time would fail me to speak of the famous Acts of his power and might in delivering the three children, *Daniel*, and many others, who through Faith in this Friend, and with his assistance have subdued Kingdoms, and wrought wonders. This 'tis to have God for a Friend! he it is who can shake Rocks, and remove the Mountains out of their places; he it is that can set the Stars in aray, and make them to fight his battels against the wicked; it is he that can soon cool the courage of daring sinners, that venture to strike at him through his peoples sides. If the proudest of them all say, *Who is the Lord?* it may be a company of Frogs, or Flies, or Lice, shall take up his quarrel, and say, Who is that bold sinner that durst make such a challenge: behold, we are here to answer him. Should God but alarm his stoutest Enemies with but such Forces as he raised sometimes in the like case, *Joel 2. 6. How would their faces gather blackness, and their joynts be unloosed?* Was not that blaspheming

ming Prince that asked, *Who was that God that could deliver out of his hands?* soon answered with a vengeance: *Who ever hardened himself against him and prospered?* For any to oppose him or his, is for a Worm to contend with a Giant, for Thorns and Straw to fight with the Flames. *David* knew what Friend he had for his Second, when he fought a Duel with that monstrous *Philistine*. Is not all this enough to prove the power of God, whom I would commend to weak man for a Friend? And that which puts life into this *Motive*, all this power of God is employed for the people of God, and upon their reconciliation with God, it is all engaged for their security, *Psal.* 84. 11. *The Lord God is a Sun and a shield, &c.* And he that hath this shield, may laugh at the shaking of the spear. And what say you now to such a Friend; would it not be good fighting under such a Banner, where one should be sure never to be conquered? Though the coasts be now clear as you think, and the enemy hath not taken the field; but what if he should, what force hast thou to resist him? Hast thou strength enough of thy own to oppose thy God (for I shall tell you, that if you look to your business no better then you have done, you will find him amongst your enemies) and art thou able to stand it out against the Devil and the World? for as fair as they speak you, ere long you may find to your cost, they will break their League, and side with the strongest. And now you that are contented to live without God, that are so confident of your own strength, and think you have no need of the alliance of the mighty God; before you venture thus desperately into the field, let me request of

you

you to muſter up all the Forces, and let's ſee their number and power, and ſome acts of their noble gallantry; lets ſee ſome Demonſtrations of your power, that we may tremble before you, and that we may be induced to believe that you are ſtrong enough to look your enemy in the face. Canſt thou by thy power raiſe ſuch another building as this is? Canſt thou ſpread out the Heavens as a Curtain, or cover the Sun with darkneſs; Canſt thou call to the Lightnings, and will they anſwer thee, and ſay, Here we are? Shouldeſt thou ſpeak to that haſty Champion, and command him to ſtand ſtill one quarter of an hour, would he obey thee? Come, try thy ſtrength, and if theſe things be too much, what doſt thou talk of power? When thou art but a worm, why doſt thou boaſt, as if thou hadſt more ſtrength then all the Angels in Heaven. Alas poor—— I know not what to call thee, that art not able to deal with a Flye or a Frog, doſt thou think thy ſelf a match for the Almighty? Well then, is it not good prudence to agree with the adverſary quickly, while he is in the way? Will it be counted cowardize or folly to ſubmit thy ſelf, when as if you perſiſt, you are ſure to periſh, and if you accept of his tearms, all that ſtrength of his is yours; and if God be for you, what need you care who is againſt you? your enemies may do their worſt, and you laugh at them; they may kill you, but they cannot hurt you. Here, here's the wiſdom of thoſe the world calls fools; *Epict. Enchirid. c. 79.* They ſee men are weak like themſelves, and therefore they will make ſure of ſuch a friend that may ſtand them in ſome ſtead againſt their moſt potent Adverſaries. And this

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is another qualification of this friend which I would commend to your acquaintance, he is an able Friend.

First, he is the most kind and loving Friend.

Secondly, he is the most comfortable Friend.

Thirdly, he is the most able and powerful Friend.

Fourthly, He is the most active Friend. He is not indifferent whether his Friends sink or swim, neither is he active in his own affairs, and remiss and slow in theirs; but he minds his friends and his acquaintance as himself, he concerns himself in their interest, and that to some purpose. It would be sad indeed for the people of God, if God should stand neuter, when their affairs are in agitation. But God takes up their interest, and makes it his own; they have committed themselves and their All to him, and he will not see them wronged. His eye runs up and down through the whole world, to shew himself strong on the behalf of them that fear his name; he keeps constant watch and ward about his: and he that can injure any of his out of his sight, shall go unpunished, *Isa.* 27. 3. The Lord speaks this concerning his dear ones, under the Metaphor of a vineyard; and doth this great husbandman neglect his vineyard? doth he not dig, manure, and stone it, and keep out the wild Boar, and Foxes, doth he not prune it and tender it chastly? *I the Lord do keep it, none shall come into it to gather the fruit of it without my leave, I will water it every moment.* So that you see what pains God takes for his. They that dare to engage any of Gods darlings, shall have enough of it before they have done: whosoever they be that do any of his

wrong

wrong, shall soon know to their cost, that they had an active friend that will not let their injuries pass over unobserved. Do not think that God stands by all this while looking on like an idle spectator; do you believe that he sits in Heaven, and looks down upon the earth for nothing? no, his designs are carrying on apace, and God can make *Haman* hold *Mordecai*'s stirrup, and lead his horse for him, and to proclaim the high respect that the great King of Heaven hath for him; I mean, make the greatest of his peoples enemies, do that which shall at the long run, promote the real interest, comfort, honour and peace of his people. Be not deceived, O sinner, that sleest, and talkest, and actest, thou thinkest without controle, thou speakest against no ordinary persons, nor thy brother, but God's Friends, *His Anointed Ones, for whose sake he hath rebuked Kings*. And because God doth not presently brandish his glittering sword, and sheath it in thy bowels, therefore thou thinkest him to be like thy self, a hater of them; but know this for a certain, that their God whom they serve, their God whom they love, he can and will deliver them: he that sits in the Heavens laughs, and the Lord hath all their enemies in derision: and they themselves shall ere long prove the truth I am now affirming, that the Saints Friend is an active Friend. Sinners and Saints too shall both ere long know that God doth his work quick enough. What speedy dispatch doth God make when he begins to avenge the quarrel of *Zion*? and nothing in the world doth provoke Divine Justice to shew it self with a witness, as the unmerciful oppressing of his people. When God comes to deal with

Babylon,

Babylon, and all her upholders, what short work doth he make of it? *Isa.* 47. It was so before, and it will be so again, *Rev.* 18. 8. *Her plagues shall come upon her in a moment, even then when she thinks her self most far from danger, when she talks of sitting like a Lady for ever, and reckons upon ages, God soon confutes her.* Let the enemies of Gods people, whoever they be, look to it, if they whom they oppose be of the seed of the *Jews*, the Friends of God, before whom their Predecessors in all ages have fallen, they shall not stand. When God begins he will go through stitch, he will make short work of it. When the iniquity of the *Amorites* is full, when the set time to deliver *Zion* is come, then, then you shall soon see *Zion* hath an active friend; *The Lord will rear out of Zion, and make the beasts of the forrest to tremble.* Therefore in the faith of this, the Virgin Daughter of *Zion* can despise her enemies, she can laugh them to scorn: The Daughter of *Jerusalem* can shake her head at them, and say, *Whom hast thou reproached, blasphemed, and against whom hast thou exalted thy voice, and lift up thine eyes? even against the holy one of Israel.* Isa. 37. 22. Did God ever come too late to help his? did he ever stay too long to do them any good? hasty unbelieving man may think so, but the wisest know God, time is time enough, make sure of this friend, and you will find it. God so works in the dark, and we see him not, his paths are in the deep water, and we behold not his steps; his ways are sometimes in the clouds, but yet for all that the Wheels of his Chariot run swiftly. How long was it after *Rabsacheh's* blasphemy, before his Host was discomfited by an unseen power? how long doth *Pharaoh* oppress

Israel

Israel before he knows that God saw it? How long was it before proud *Haman* tumbled after the hatching of that devilish decree? How long is it after the slaying of the Witnesses that their murderers begin to quake? What a while is it many times before an earthly friend (especially if there be any inequality or decay in their estates) be brought to act with any life for his friend, when it will stand him in some trouble, hazzard, and cost? Such friends are rarities. When you come at midnight and ask for to borrow bread, he is a bed and can't rise from his children: and thus he would put you off with some lazy excuse or other. And if he do answer your desires, perhaps 'tis more to be rid of you, then out of true affection. But when doth God put off his thus? when doth he say, I am not yet at leisure, and I can't yet help you? God doth indeed many times let his stay long, as men count long before he visibly helps them. But are invisible helps to be slighted? Is it nothing, that even when he seems to delay, that he bares up their spirits, and makes his people even then to praise, love, and rejoyce in him more then they did before; whereas others would be cursing and fuming, and letting fly at God in a time of less suffering. Is it nothing that he sends his Cordial after Cordial to keep them from fainting? Doth not one servant or other come from his house day and night to comfort them? doth he not send letters to them and visit them by his refreshing Spirit? Doth not shew them by Faith how things work apace, even when their enemies little think of it? so that they would not change conditions with the happiest of all their persecutors They know that they

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have such a friend that will not be at rest till he hath brought them safe to Heaven; they know that, let the wind sit in what corner it will, it shal fil their sails & bring them nearer the harbor. As little as the world think this Friend of God is minded by him, why, yet for all that, he dare trust his God with estate, body, and soul, and a thousand times more, if they had it, they know in whom they have believed, they understand who it is they trust. Let's see any of the men of the world that count themselves so wise in their choice of a friend; Let's see any of them all that can bring a friend that hath been so active for them as God hath been for his. One hath chosen Silver and Gold and a great Estate, and such a one in the worlds *Kalender* is writ down for one of the wisest in his choice. Well, let's see now what this friend can do for you: your body is upon the rack, your hands are weak, your legs tremble, your stomach fails, your sleep departs from you; where now is your friend, call for him speedily, come let's see now if he be a friend indeed, lets see it: can he give you one hours sleep? can he help you to one moments ease? can he give you no refreshment, no help? take him, lay him by you on your bed; O it is so heavy I can't endure it; lay it in your bosom, O I can't breath for it; take it away, take it away, it will not do. Why, Sir, do you know what you say? it is your old friend, which you valued above God himself, it is a bag of Gold, I know it, I know it, but it presses me down, it's so heavy I can't bare it, away with it, away with it; and is this the friend that you prized so very highly, is this all the kindness that he hath

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for you now. Is this all the help that he can give you at such a time, when a friend should stand one in some stead; and who would trust such a friend? were you not told as much long ago how you should be served at last; would God think you, have done no more for you, if you had valued his Acquaintance as much as you did Gold and Silver. Try once more what your friend will do for you, pray him now, if ever, to shew himself a friend. Cry aloud, Sir, he is your God, your Friend, either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is in a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth and must be awaked, 1 *King.* 18.27. but will not hear, can he not help? Well then, at last be wise, and trust him no more, make a better choise before you are quite ruined. Choose a friend that can do something for you, for I perceive he that you trusted so much can't. What say you to one that is never well (with Reverence be it spoken) but when he is doing some kindnesses or other for his? it's he who was projecting great things for his friend before they had a being, it is he who will, ere long, do wonders for them, who seem to be forgotten, the Dead I mean; he will gather up their scattered bones, and restore that flesh which the worms had devoured; it is he, who will in the twinkling of an eye raise, or change these vile bodies, and make them like the glorious body of his Son; it is he who will acquit you against all the accusations of the Law, Conscience and the Devil: it is he that will set a rich Crown upon your Head, the least Jewel in which doth sparkle more then all the Diamonds in the world; and before all this, it is he that doth infinitely concern himself in all

thy affairs: upon a kindness done for thee but he will reward, not an injury but he observes: not a word thou speakest, not a good thought thou thinkest, not an action that thou dost, that is good, but he hath a hand in it: and thou shalt shortly know all this, and wonder that thou shouldest no more love, admire, and delight in such a friend, who kept thee sleeping and waking, who did all thy works in thee and for thee. *Matth.* 25. 35. *Rev.* 2. 2. *Psal.* 12. 5. *Psal.* 18. 10. and *vers.* 18. *Deut.* 33. 26, 27. *There is none like unto the God of* Jesurun, *who rideth upon the Heavens for thy help, and in his excellency on the skie. The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath thee are the everlasting arms: and he shall thrust out the enemy from before thee, and shall destroy them.* And this is the next qualification of this Friend which may commend him to your acquaintance. He is an active Friend, he is the most kind and loving, he is the comfortable and refreshing, the most able and powerful Friend, the most vigorous and active Friend.

Fifthly, He is the most humble and condescending Friend. He doth not scarnot be acquainted with the meanest, the beggar may be as welcome to him as the Prince; the poor and rich are all one to him, he is no respecter of persons. He takes as much notice of *Job* upon the Dunghil, as *David* upon the Throne. He knows any of his friends in Rags as well as in Silks, in Sheepskins and Goatskins, as well as in Scarlet and fine Linnen. Nay, I may well venture to speak it, such have usually most of his company. Look up poor creature, and consider what a privilege thou hast, behold God himself, the King of Glory, a willing to be acquainted with

dure; marke, he calls thee, the Gospel is preached to the poor; the great ones of the world hold scorn to look upon thee; the rich disdain thy society; *Lazarus* is fitter for the company of dogs then *Dives*, as he thinks; but it's well for poor *Lazarus* God is not of the same mind, for when *Lazarus* is received into the Court, *Dives* is shut out among the dogs. *David* doth not like that the lame and the blind, and such like Creatures should be in his Palace, none of those must dwell in his *Sion*, but of such as these is the Kingdom of Heaven, such as these dwell in that *Jerusalem*, with such God is and may be acquainted, he doth more frequently visit the smoaking thatch't Cottages, then the glistering Courts. Who are the persons that live in Heaven upon Earth? Who are those honoured ones that are most in their Princes presence, who have this Kings ear most? are they not such as I have been speaking of? It is their company that the great God is most pleased with, he loves to hear their voice, and see their faces; how is he delighted when he hears a knot of poor honest souls together, praying and talking of his excellency, and discoursing of the glory and beauty of their Noble Lord and Friend. He accounts the shining ruffling Gallants but rubbish in comparison of these; and though now these precious sons and daughters be trampled under foot, and counted as dirt in the street, yet ere long the world shall know their worth, when they shall see them made up among Gods Jewels, *Mal.* 3. 16. God hath chosen the poor in the world rich in grace. What say'st thou to this, O poor man, doth not thy heart leap within thee for joy? In this world if a poor man have any

any busines of consequence to do, any Petition to put up, though it be never so just, though it be for his life; yet how difficult a thing is it for him to get Audience? How hard is it for such to have acces to their Prince? But lo here's a Prince that is more above the greatest Monarch in the world, then he is above the meanest worm; and yet so infinite is his condescention and goodnes, that the meanest may be admitted into his presence and welcom. He will hear their suits, answer their requests, and be as free with them, and give them leave to be as free with him, as if they were the greatest persons in the world. Are there not many thousands of poor Christians that can subscribe to this Truth? Are there not many who know not what it is to feed on dainties, and fare deliciously every day, that have no more then Pilgrims, that upon the matter live from hand to mouth, whose greatest daintis is Bread and Cheese and small Beer? and yet they complain not of hard usage, they think their Master a good Master for all this? Are there not many that have no servants to command, not a foot of land to till, no bags of money to tell over, no change of raiment to put on, & yet for all this are company for God? These are those that can tell you strange stories of Gods wonderful kindnes; they will tell you, at such a time in such a Duty the Lord came in and sweetly revived them; at another time he brought them into his Banquetting-house, and his Banner over them was Love; at another time he brought them some clusters from that goodly Vine, and they sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was pleasant to their taste; and on such a Sab-

hath they were taken into mount *Pisgah*, and had a lovely prospect of that goodly land. Who are the persons that can speak most experimentally of Communion with God? Alas, alas, few of the great ones of the world know what these things mean; nay, the very first step towards *Zion*, they have not trod, I mean, they know not what Conversion and Regeneration signifies; they are as greatly to seek here as *Nicodemus* himself. *Not many Nobli*, O methinks, that Scripture should make some of the ungodly Great Ones of the world to quake as much as that hand-writing upon the wall did one of their Predecessors. O the infinite goodness *that reveals these things to babes, which are hid from the wise and prudent, even so Father, for it hath seemed good in thy eyes.* O that God should look upon such and such poor contemptible Creatures, and pass by the Grandees of the world; that such poor Creatures may converse with his holy Majesty every day, and go as freely and as frequently as to the dearest friend in the world, and not be grutched, but the oftener the welcomer. Lift up your heads with joy and thankfulness, O ye poor of his flock, though the great ones scorn your company, and disdain to set you with the Dogs of their Flock, though they think it much below them to speak to you, most vouchsafe to converse with you, yet the mighty God their great Lord doth not think it below him to converse with you. That's a strange expression, yet he spoke in that manner. Eye therefore, O ye humble despised one, that values the favour of this Friend above the world, and prize his loving kindness above life itself: here and read it, and take the best of it, it's yours, feed upon it, it's a

sweet bit indeed. *Is. 66. 1, 2. Thus saith the Lord, Heaven is my Throne, and Earth is my footstool: where is the house that ye will build me, and where is the place of my rest, for all these things hath mine hand made, and all those things have been, saith the Lord, but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit and trembleth at my word.* I shall have occasion hereafter, a little to open these words under another *Head*, wherefore I shall now but name it. O what encouragement is here for the most despicable Creature in the world, they may be ashappy in the acquaintance with God, as the mightiest Lord in the World. Here's one that will not be ashamed to own thee, when others will take little notice of thee; thou thinkest these things strange, it may be, and so they be indeed, but yet not more strange then true. It doth not a little engage the affections of the meaner rank, if a Person of quality do but give them a kind look, especially if they may have freedom of access to him. O what a priviledg they count it, but such a one to undertake the whole managing of a poor mans affairs, for him to come to his house, and to look into his cupboard, and to take care of supplying all his wants, and coming frecquently to him, and supping, and he with him, and to make a great provision for him, as if he were a Prince; where is such a thing as this heard of, but if such a thing were, it were a light matter in comparison of what I am speaking? Where do we ever read of a great King sending Embassador after Embassador to a poor begger? What history doth record such a story as this, that a great Monarch should make earnest suit for many

years together to a worthless slave, that he can hang when he will, that hath not a rag to her back, to make her his Queen; this is rare indeed, this is beyond president among men; but yet it is that which the great God doth not disdain to do; Nay, let me tell thee whosoever thou art remaining in a state of Nature, that readest these lines, that a this very time God is doing no less then all this comes to for thee; & I in the name of my great Master do come to expostulate the case with thee; that God that gave thee thy breath, and can take it away as soon as he pleaseth; that God that made heaven and earth, to whom all the Nations of the earth are but as the drop of a bucket to the vast Ocean, who holdeth the Sea in the hollow of his hands, that weigheth the mountains in scales, and the hills in a ballance: that God that hath no less then a heaven to reward with, and a hell and everlasting flames to punish with, he it is, that doth by me beseech thee to be reconciled unto him, he it is that would be your Friend, your Acquaintance. O unheard of mercy! O infinite and unparallel'd condescention! I have oft thought there are two great astonishing wonders in the world, The one is Gods infinite mercy and condescention to rebellious apostatized man; and the other is mans insensibility and ingratitude; that there needs such a stir, and so many words to perswade him to close with this wonder of kindness, and that so very few should be prevailed with. See this set forth to the life in *Ezek.* 16. *Isa.* 1. 2, 3. *Psal.* 113 4, 5, 6, 7, 8. *The Lord is high above all nations, and his glory above the heavens. Who is like unto the Lord our God, who dwelleth on high, who humbleth*

him

himself to behold the things that are in heaven, and the things that are in the earth: he raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth the needy out of the dunghill, that he may sit with Princes, &c. The *Psalmist* therefore had no small reason to cry out with admiration, *Psal.*8.4. *What is man that thou art mindful of him, and the son of man that thou visitest him? What is man that thou takest knowledge of him, or the son of man, that thou makest account of him?* Psal.144.3. Job.7.17, 18. *What is man that thou shouldest magnifie him, and that thou shouldest set thy heart upon him, and that thou shouldest visit him every morning, and try him every moment?* Behold his Majesty, and yet how he stoops? Nahum 1.4. Psal. 18. Job 37, 38, & 39 Chapters, Isa.40. Psal.138 6. *Though the Lord be high, yet hath he respect unto the lowly: but the proud he knows afar off.* That which (*Seneca, Epist.* 17.) the Moralist speaks of Wisdom may be said of God, *Epist.*61. *It is lawful to come to him without rich attire and great attendance, come naked and you shall be as kindly entertained, as if you did shine in cloth of gold, and were bespatkled with Diamonds. He will not give freer access to the rich then the poor, neither doth he value a strong healthful person, before a sick and crazie one, a beautiful and well-trimm'd gallant, before a cankered, old, deformed creature.* Thus far *Seneca* and the Scripture speaks the same language. Neither *Job*'s boyls, nor *Lazarus*'s sores made God keep ever the further off from them. I knew one all of a cleave with the small Pox, whom this friend came to visit, and in that condition, how many kisses had that sweet creature from God? O it would do ones heart good to have such a friend! And this is the next qualification of this Friend, which may commend him to thy Acquaintance,

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be thou never so poor, never so vile and sinful in thy own eyes, such as thy self he hath made welcome, and upon his Word, wilt thou but come away speedily, thou shalt be welcome too.

Sixthly, He is the most Faithful friend, where is the man that can tax him of the least unfaithfulness? Which is the man that can say that he ever forsook any of his in their greatest exigency? he hath been trusted more then once with more then the world is worth a thousand times over, and they which trusted him most, never accuseth, never thought their choisest Jewels, their whole estate could be left in safer hands; his promise, and his performance have kept forth, he never failed in his the least punctilio or circumstance of time. Ask *Abraham*, who was one of Gods friends, God tells him that his seed shall inherit *Canaan*, and that they shall be strangers in a Land that was not theirs four hundred years, and did he not at the expiring of that time, though it was at midnight almost, bring them out of *Egypt*: God keeps his time with them to a minuit; ask *Josuah* whether he did not live to see this promise made good; inquire of *David* and he will tell you again, that no Friend is so trusty: the unfaithfulness is on mans side there indeed, there I say in many an unhandsome thing done, and yet for all God doth not (as you shall hear hereafter) presently break with them, if they forget that they are Children he will not forget that he is their Father, if God should have done thus by them, many thousands of them that are now in Glory had been somewhere else. He promiseth indeed great things unto his Friends, but do's he not do as he saith, if not

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in the very thing, yea in that which is honest; and who would account himself wronged, if one that promised him ten pound in silver, should in the stead of it give him ten thousand pound in Gold and Jewels; I believe such a one would not be thought to be worthy of his word, nor the person to whom he made this promise, count himself injured. And this God doth frequently, did men but understand the worth of what God pays them with, it may be God doth not cloth them in Silks and Satins, (neither do I know that he ever promised to do so) but yet he cloths them with the Righteousness of Christ, and bestows those glorious robes upon them, in which ye look more trim and neat then in cloths of Gold; he hath made him such a Suit that is the handsomer for the much wearing; he may eat, and drink, and sleep, and work in it and keep it on his back day and night, and it shall not be wrinkled, it is the better for use. He is a faithfull Friend, and none that ever had to do with him can say any thing to the contrary; he never forgot any business that any of his Friends desired him to do for them, he never neglected it, or did it by the halves; when did any of them come to him to reveal some secret, loathsome distemper to him that he reproached them with it? To which of them did he promise a heaven, and put them off with this World; when this Pilot undertakes to steer their course, their their vessel shall never split upon the Rock, run upon the Sands, or spring a Leak, so as to sink in the Seas, to be sure he will steer them safe in the harbour. *Ar. Epis.* p. 16. He was no Christian, yet I suppose none will deny but he spake

good Divinity, who saith, *If a man will choose God for his Friend, he shall travel securely through a Wilderness, that hath many beasts of prey in it, he shall pass safely through this World, for he only is safe that hath God for his guide.* Doth he not speak a little like *David* himself, *Psal.* 37. 26. Who never expected to come to Glory, except he were guided by his counsel! Now if a poor Heathen could say thus, and see good reason to trust God, and admire his Faithfulness as he doth frequently; and so doth *Seneca*, justifying Gods Faithfulness in all his dealings with the best men in all their sufferings, and the prosperity of the wicked; what then shall the heavenly Christian say, who hath experienced so much of Gods faithfulness in answering his Prayers, in fulfilling his promises, and supplying all his exigencies. *David* will tell you as much, and justifie God in his most severe dispensations towards him; *In very Faithfulness hast thou afflicted me, Psal.* 119. 75. In our earthly and bodily affairs, we should never count that Physitian faithful that will rather open a vein, or put his Patient to exquisite torture to save his life, then let him dye easily. We believe a Father may whip his stubborn Child with more love then let him alone. To prevent the ax or halter with a rod, is no cruelty. Faithful are the wounds of a friend, *Prov.* 27. 6. It was not for nothing that the Psalmist sticks so close to God he had a little experience of the unfaithfulness of other friends, *Psal.* 38. 9, 11. *His Lovers and his Friends stood aloof from his sore, and his Kinsmen stood afar off.* May not a great many complain as well as *Job*, *That their Brethren have dealt deceitfully as a brook, and as the stream of brooks they pass away, Job* 6. 15.

A friend may forget one, a brother may disown one, father and mother may cast one off, but here's a friend that sticks closer then all. Now he is a better friend to his then they are to themselves; when they love themselves so little as to undo themselves, he loved them so well as to save them; when they loved themselves so as to poison themselves; he loved them, so as to give them a powerful Antidote; when they like children would have the knife, he takes it out of their hands least they should cut their fingers; when they are so careless as to surfit themselves, he is so faithful as to keep them short, and diet them; and all this I hope that they understand themselves will not call unkindness or infidelity. *David* had in his time some friends that made no bones of hazarding their lives for him; some of them were willing to quench his thirst though with their blood, and yet for all that in all his life he never met with so faithful a friend as his God, *Psal.* 89. 8. *O Lord God of hosts, who is a strong God like unto thee, or to thy faithfulness round about thee?* He had rather trust his God then any of them all. God is a real true faithful Friend; he tells us things as they be; he doth not speak more of things then the nature of them doth require; he doth not tell the best, and hide the worst; he doth not speak all of Heaven, and nothing of suffering, but saith plainly, all that will live godly in Christ Jesus, they must suffer persecution; and Christ saith, Those that will be his Disciples, must take up their Cross and follow him, and that through many tribulations, they must enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. He speaks of sowing in tears, as well as reaping in joy; of af-

fection as well as glory. And when he speaks of the glory of another world, he doth not amplify advance his excellency. When he speaks of his Wrath, or Hell, or Sin, he doth not make them greater evils then they be. The Lord is faithful in all his dealing, and that they which love him know right well. Whatsoever doth happen in the world, doth happen justly and faithfully; and so if thou wilt but well observe, thou shalt find. And what sayest thou after all this, thou who hast tried many and many a friend so called, and hast by sad experience found or last found them all unfaithful, and art almost ready to say of all men, that they are lyars, and that truth and reality are rarities; thou thinkest there is scarce a man upon the earth to be trusted. And wilt thou never be afraid of such a friend? wilt thou at last be wise and be acquainted with a friend that never proved unfaithful; behold, such a one that would be glad with all his heart to entertain you, would you but forsake your old treacherous acquaintance. Here, here's one that never fails, nor forsakes those that put their trust in him. The Heavens shall depart, and the Hills be removed out of their places, but his faithfulness, his love shall never depart from his; and will thou not think such a friend after all this worth the loving. Come, come, never stand fretting thy heart out with discontents, men will be men, that is, unfaithful as long as the world lasts. Do you expect as long as sin reigns in mens souls, that as long as Satan doth so much abound therein, that they should forget to be selfish, covetous, deceitful? but now God will always be like himself, a God, faithful, true, holy, just, and

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any one in Heaven, or in Earth can condemn God justly, of the least unfaithfulness, my mouth shall soon be stopped. In this thing I confess my self to be of *Antoninus* his mind, who said, *That if there be a God, as there is most certainly, why then God must necessarily be most faithful, most wise, most good; but if there be no God, it is not worth the while to live in a world, in which there is nothing but sin, confusion, disorder, and no hopes of a redress, the excellency of our being our Reason would make our misery more exquisite, and our lives less desirable.* But blessed be God it is not come to that pass, that we should need question the being of a God; for as one saith wisely, *Thou hast far more reason to question thy own being then Gods.* Now, I say again, methinks he that hath been so oft perplexed with many unfaithful, unworthy carriages from them which he called friends, should be at last perswaded to try what this one friend would do for him. O what abundance of sorrow would it prevent, if men would but trust God more and men less. This, this is the Friend sick and well, rich and poor, living and dying, always the same. Make sure of this Friend, and thou art safe; thy All is then in safe and faithful hands.

Seventhly, He is a rich Friend. *The earth is the Lords, and the fulness thereof; cattel upon a thousand hills is his.* He it is that hath the absolute disposal of Crowns and Scepters, he it is that can daily raise all his Favourites to a high Estate; if the world and all its glory can do his any good, if Kingdoms and vast Dominions can advantage them, he can with better reason then he did to Christ say, All this is mine, and if thou wilt love me and worship me, I will give you as much of

it as will do thee good; and who would account it a kindness to be given that which will do one hurt? but these are but toys and trifles in comparison of what God hath to bestow upon his friends. Lift up thine eyes, and behold those glistering Stars; look upon that stately Canopy that hangs over thy head; why, all this is nothing almost to the glory which shall be revealed; there is a far greater disproportion between what we see and enjoy at the best here below, then there is between the footstool and the Crown. O could you but by faith draw the curtain and see what is within; O did you but know what's behind those hangings which you see wrought so curiously, the work of his fingers! O that, that's the place, there's a house indeed, there's a palace, couldst thou but by faith and meditation take a view of it; could you but make a voyage into that far Country, and see that City of God, and discourse with the inhabitants of the *New Jerusalem*; what discoveries should you then have of the Riches, State, and Grandeur of that Princes Court! Shouldst thou but see those Treasuries opened, and know the worth of Gods Jewels, thou wouldst wonder what men and women meant, that they should need so much perswading to be acquainted with him that had such things to bestow; you would judge him worse then mad, who should not joyfully embrace any Overtures of this nature; in a word, they would reckon that person besotted that should not with all possible gratitude close with such kind of proposals. Come along therefore with me, poor soul, thou that art not worth a groat, and hast never a friend that can or will give you any thing to speak

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of, come along with me, and take a ſhort proſpect of the Territories of this mighty Monarch, let's get up to mount *Piſgah*, and make a ſurvey of that goodly land, let's take a turn or two in the Courts of his palace; conſider well the pleaſantneſs of this ſeat, how rarely it is accommodated, the richneſs of the furniture, the nobleneſs of the inhabitants, the ſweetneſs of that harmony that ſounds night and day in that Temple, the unconceivable coſtlineſs, riches, glory, and excellency of every thing. Do but look a little about thee, are not thine eyes even dazelled at the ſight? do you ſee what building that is, whoſe walls are Jaſper, and the City is all of pure Gold, like unto clear glaſs, and the foundation of the walls of that City are garniſhed with all manner of precious ſtones, *Rev.* 21. &c. And what think you now, where is the Prince upon earth that ever was maſter of ſuch an eſtate? what are his attendants? the meaneſt of thoſe that ſtand in his preſence, is no leſs then a King; the leaſt of his ſervants is more rich and glorious then the mighteſt Potentate that ever trod upon earthly mold, that was a ſtranger to God. This God doth not grudge to give that which is more worth then a thouſand Kingdoms to his Darlings I might tell alſo at what a rate they live, who are fed always at his Table, and what dainty diſhes they feed upon; I might ſpeak of their Cloathing and Robes, all which ſpeak the riches of that Lord which maintains his ſervants ſo highly. But what am I doing, *Can I graſp the heavens in my arms? or take up the ſea in the hallow of my hands? Can I meaſure the heaven of heavens, or weigh the mountains in ſcales, or the hills in a ballance?* Could I do all

and a thouſand times more, yet could not give you an account of the Eſtate of him who would be your friend, your husband: at the beſt, I can but give you a ſuperficial groſs relation of it; and when I have ſaid all that I can ſpeak of, and all the men in the world with all their tongues have ſpoke what they can too, nay, let Angels with their heavenly Rhetorick do what they can to ſet out the glory of his Kingdom; I ſay, when all this is done, you muſt remember all falls ſhort of what it is, and that ſince the beginning of the world men have not heard, neither can it enter into the heart of man, to conceive what a God is worth, what a friend you may have of him, if you will but ſpeedily be acquainted with him. His Kingdom hath no bounds, and his Dominions reach further then both the *Indies*. The ſmall love tokens that he ſends now and then to his Beloved into a far country are of infinitely more value then all the Lockets of Diamonds and richeſt Pearls and Jewels in the world, *Pro.*8. Behold how merrily *Rebeccah* looks upon a ſorry Jewel of two preſented by *Eliezer* from his Maſter, how ſoon is her heart conquered? and why ſhould we not be more taken with things of far greater worth? What, is all this as much as nothing with you? Methinks your hearts ſhould be all in a fire; methinks you ſhould quickly ſay, O that I could but ſee him! who will bring me acquainted with him, he ſhall have my heart, my deareſt love? Methinks, ſhould I ask you the ſame queſtion that they did *Rebeccah*, Wilt thou go along with me to ſuch a friend? you ſhould readily, without any further diſpute ſay, yes with all my heart, and think long to be up and going

going. Why then do you talk of a year, a month longer? O what ail poor Creatures to make us ſtand waiting ſo long for an anſwer? Do you ever expect a better offer? Do you look to advance your ſelves ſomewhere elſe? Can you hope for a better, a richer match? Go then and ſearch out among all thy Lovers which make ſuit to thee, which of them can feed thee with ſuch coſtly viands, which of them can cloath you in ſuch Royal Apparel? Which of them can make you ſuch a Joynture? Conſider wiſely and ſpeedily, that I may turn to the right hand or the left. What, ſaiſt thou, canſt thou amongſt them all better thy ſelf? Is there any one like him? Is there any of the Sons of the mighty comparable to him? Are any of the Kings, or great ones of the Earth able to make you ſuch an offer, or ſhould they, can any of them make it good? What have you yet reſolved upon the point or not? What is it you ſtand for, I pray do you queſtion the truth of what I ſpeak? Do you make account I ſpeak of the higheſt, and make the beſt of things? Why, then let me tell you further, I have not, I cannot tell you the half of what you will find to be true, if you would come to be throughly reſolved, or of what you will believe hereafter, to your ſorrow if you ſtill refuſe him. And I muſt further add to what I ſaid before, that whatever riches God poſſeſſes, he will joynture you in, as ſoon as you ſhall in good earneſt be willing to accept him for your Friend, all that I can ſpeak of, and more too, you may call your own. Ask, and it ſhall be given without preſcribing how much more then you can ask or think ſhall be given you. Your Lord and

husband is not so niggardly as *Ahashuerus*, who said, *What is thy request, and what is thy petition, Queen Esther, and it shall be given thee, to the half of my Kingdom*? But God saith what is thy request, and what is thy petition poor Soul, and it shall be granted to the whole of my Kingdom, what is it thou wanteſt, what attendants doſt thou lack to wait upon thee to my Court? are they Prophets, Apoſtles, Miniſters, Angels, they ſhall be given, 1 *Cor.* 3. 21. Do but try him, he bids you ask, and you ſhall have: Let me give you this one *memento*, Ask like one that hath to do with a rich King, who hates to do any thing below himſelf; remember it is he that delights to give like a God: widen therefore thy deſires as large as Heaven, be bold and ſpeak a great word, and I warrant thee thou ſhalt not be denied; tell God, that ſeeing in his infinite goodneſs and condeſcention, he hath been pleaſed to give thee leave to ask without reſtraint, thou doſt humbly requeſt his Son for thy Lord and Husband, himſelf for thy Father, God, and Friend, his Kingdom for thy Dowry, the Righteouſneſs of his Son for thy Ornament, Cloathing, and Beauty, the comforts of his Spirit and abundance of his grace to bear thy charges handſomly, till thou comeſt to his houſe. This is high indeed! but thy great and noble Lord loves dearly to hear ſuch covetous Petitioners, who will be put off with nothing but ſuch great things. When do any of theſe go ſad from his Court? When do any of the ſeed of *Jacob* ſeek his face in vain? This, this is the generation of thriving ones, who ſeek for life, immortality and glory; who ſeek thy face, O God of *Jacob*. And now what do you ſay,

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will you believe all this? Dare you take my word? I am perſwaded none of you all think I dare tell you a lye, and do you any wrong; but for all that, I do not deſire you ſhould take my word, nor the word of any man living in a thing that concerns Eternity; but take his word who cannot lye, *Pſal.* 8. 18. *Riches and honour are with me; yea, durable riches and righteouſneſs.* verſ. 19. *My fruit is better then gold, yea, then fine gold; and my revenue then choice ſilver.* The wiſe man tells us, *That wealth makes many friends,* Prov. 19. 4, 6. *And that many will intreat the favour of the Prince; and that every one is a Friend to him that gives gifts.* If this might be in Spirituals, I ſhould not fear, but that I ſhould prevail with all my hearers, to ſeek the friendſhip of God; if their real intereſt did weigh with them, if true riches and wealth could win their affections, if the moſt ſubſtantial good things might ſignifie any thing, if ſolid reaſons might biaſs them, I ſhould not fear going away without them. But, alas, alas, how little power have all theſe things with the ſenſual world? What are men and women turn'd to? What ſots and bruits are they in the concerns of their ſouls, and the affairs of that other world? Men run up and down hunting after good things, and have taken a falſe ſeat, they hope to catch that at laſt which they will feed upon, and ſatisfie themſelves with. I tell thee, O man, who askeſt, who will ſhew us any good? Here, here it is; riches thou meaneſt: well then let it be ſo; And if I do not prove that what I offer thee from my great Maſter, to be a thouſand times more worth thy ſeeking then gold or ſilver, and better coin then that which bore *Ceſars*

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ſtamp upon it, then say you were cheated. Thou telleſt over thy moneys very faſt methinks, but are you ſure all that is Gold which doth ſo gliſter? Is all that currant Silver? Will it go in another Countrey? Is it not poſſible, but that you may be miſtaken. Here, here is the Gold that is tried, it will go any where; here is one that will give you, will you but deſire earneſtly his acquaintance, ſuch treaſure that will not periſh, ſuch ſilver that hath no tin, ſuch gold which hath no droſs, ſuch true riches that can't be taken away from you. Ask that Saint which looks ſo merrily, that lives ſo bravely, how he got his eſtate, and how he came to be ſo rich all of a ſudden; he will ſoon tell you how, and where his treaſure lies, and yet not fear being robbed. He hath of late been acquainted with a Friend that hath given him that which makes him eſteem himſelf more worth then if he were poſſeſſed of ten times more then ever *Alexander* or *Ceſar* was. A Friend of *Cyrus* in *Xenophon* being asked where his Treaſure was, which made him to think ſo highly of himſelf? his anſwer was, *Where* Cyrus *his Friend was.* A Chriſtian may with much better reaſon and cheatfulneſs, if asked, where his Riches and Eſtate liese, anſwer, *Where God his Friend is.* Ask the pooreſt of them that are acquainted with God, the weakeſt of all his Children, what they will ſell their portion for, and what you ſhall give them for to reſign up all their intereſt in God, to quit their claim to this inheritance: Would they not all be of *Pauls* mind, and even ſcorn the motion, and count the glory of a thouſand worlds but as dung and droſs in compariſon of the excellency of the know-

knowledge of Christ Jesus their Lord, *Phil.* 3. 8. Nay, hear what one sayes that was far less acquainted with God then any of them which I have been speaking of, when he talks of such a kind of bargain as this. (*Epict.*) *Offer me a Kingdom, and you offer me to my loss.* For, saith the same Author in another place, *A good man may look up to Heaven, as the seat of his Friend, and not fear want.* Inquire of *David* what portion God gave him? and he will soon answer you, A goodly portion indeed; and that he gave him no less then himself, and that the lines are fallen to him in pleasant places, and that he hath a goodly heritage, *Psal.* 16. and therefore he counts himself richer then if he had all his Enemies in chains, and their Royalties at his disposal; he takes himself to be a far happier man then if he were absolute Monarch of the Universe, and were to give Laws to the inferiour World; he reckons himself now as well to pass and better too then *Adam*, when he was sole Landlord of the World. It was true spoken of some body, I do well remember who. *He that hath rich Friends, must not look upon himself as poor.* O then that you would be indeed friends to your selves, and have respect to your own real interests! And what, will not this mighty and powerful Argument, which weighs as much as a thousand others, prevail? And do you still say, what profit will there be in serving the Lord, and what advantage shall I get if I be acquainted with him? To what account will it return? I again answer, To a very good account every way. Try but this trade with the wise Merchant, and you shall soon feel the benefit of it. (*Bolton*) *Conceive to thy self mountains of Gold, and rocks of Diamonds;*

monds; and to this a vast unmeasurable tract of ground, land of inheritance, the most fertile soil in the world, bringing in such a burden every year that shall trouble the owner to reap it; imagine his Pasture as great as his Arable, and all cloathed with thousands of Cattel, small and great, and none of them barren neither; suppose his Barns and Store-houses could never be emptied; and his Presses should burst out every year with new Wine. Again, *let the Merchant store his Cellars with the most pure Oyl, and furnish him with such rich Spices as the Queen of* Sheba *brought to* Solomon; *suppose he were provided with all the exquisite Rarities that the Air, Sea, or Earth can afford, yet for all this he were a beggar, in comparison of one that hath God for his Friend: Such a one possesseth him that possesseth all things.* Well then, be perswaded at last to be wise. I remember the Moralist (*Sen. Epist.* 6.) brings in one acting like a wise man, and a good proficient in Philosophy, who begins to be a friend to himself. And this is that that I am pleading with you for. If I came to rob you of all hopes of happiness, and to give away all that you have or expect, and to turn Mendicants; if I came to perswade you to espouse a beggarly interest, and to match your self so as that you should be sure to be undone, I should not wonder, if after I had spoke much, I should prevail but little. But when it is such a Cause that I am pleading, when it is for your own unspeakable advantage, when it is riches, true riches that I would have you look after, an estate that I would have you mind, which may be had for the looking after, have I not cause to admire what need a man should have to use so many words? Had you money to spare, and could I tell you of a brave purchase

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that you might have an excellent penniworth, I am perſwaded I ſhould not be very unwelcome: could I tell you of a vaſt Eſtate that you might have, upon the matter, for accepting or looking after, I believe I need not ſpend ten years in earneſt begging and intreating you to look after ſuch a thing. Should I offer to bring you to the place and perſon of whom you might buy it, ſhould I not ſoon have your company? ſhould not your neceſſaries be quickly made ready for ſuch a journey? would you not be up betimes in the morning? nay, would you not travel all night, and think it no folly nor madneſs, both to loſe ſome reſt, and to take ſome pains, ſo you might but come to poſſeſs what I ſpeak of. Nay, were there but a poſſibility of obtaining of it, at leaſt a probability, I perſwade my ſelf you would not fail to look after it the very firſt thing you did. I am ready to think you would neither ſpare for pains or coſts, ſo that after all you might but make ſure of enjoying it. Why, what then is the matter that I can do no more in the buſineſs that I am about? I am ſure I bring you tidings of a better bargain, a braver purchaſe, and ſurer inheritance, and what need I then ſpend ſo much time in arguing with you? Good Lord what mean people? Are they out of their wits, and quite beſide themſelves? What, is a Feather better then a Crown, Braſs then Gold? Is a Glaſs to be preferred before a Diamond, finite Enjoyments before everlaſting Riches, Darkneſs before Light, the World before God? O how is man ſunk below himſelf? What hath ſin made men and women? If this be not folly and madneſs, what is? Such may go for wiſe men in the worlds

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account that makes such choices; and it's possible a man in *Bedlam* may say his neighbour that tore all his hair off from his head, is well in his wits. O that this were not the condition of the far greater part of the world. And what meanest thou, O my soul, that thou art no more affected to see such vast multitudes of brain-sick frantick sinners, that make light of the tender of the Gospel, that take them for their enemies, who would do their utmost to make them happy for ever. I must profess I am even ashamed of my own heart, that I do not mingle my words with tears; that I should speak for God and souls, with so indifferent a spirit! Well, now you have heard of a great match by which you may be made for ever; are you for all this of the same mind you were? Well then, complain not if you be a beggar. Remember how you were offered, remember you might have been worth more then a world. O that inconsiderate souls did but know, and indeed know what an offer this is! O that they would not carelesly undervalue such a proposal! O what shall I do? How shall I perswade you? What Arguments will prevail? O thou great and mighty God, give men and women but a spiritual understanding of these things, make them deeply apprehensive of their excellency and reality, and then I should soon have them with thankfulness complying with these tenders which thou commandest me to make unto them. O when shall it once be! How long shall the Devil and an unbelieving heart undo so many millions? How long shall Satan triumph over souls, and cheat them thus miserably of their All? O pity, pity dear Lord, the

the besotted foolish world, and give me more compassion to souls, that I may with incomparably greater earnestness and tenderness plead thy cause with them, and resolve to give them no rest, till I have perswaded some of them in good earnest, to look after the great and weighty affairs of Eternity, and the making sure of this Friend.

Eighthly, He is a sympathizing Friend. It goes to his heart (with Reverence be it spoken) when any injuries are done to any of his; when his friends are wronged, it touches him to the quick: He is as tender of them, as of the apple of his eye. Again, *He that despiseth you, despiseth me.* Never was tender-hearted Mother more pitiful over her only Child, then God is to them which love him; never was any friend so much concerned for another as God for his. What else mean those high expressions of pity in *Isa.* 63. 9. *In all their afflictions he was afflicted, and the Angel of his presence saved them: in his love and in his pity he redeemed them, and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old.* It was not once or twice that God did so by them; but in all their afflictions, he was afflicted; which was not expressed in some cold formal words, such as these. Alas poor creatures, they are quite undone, their enemies are very barbarous, but he shew'd it in that most real demonstration, by saving of them by the Angel of his presence. A verbal kindnesse costs little, and helps little. But suppose his friends are carried Captive, are they not quite out of the reach of his help? No, his love, pity and power, will find them out in any place under heaven; and if they be slaves, he will redeem them, though he gives

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Kingdoms and Nations for their Ranſom. In his love and in his pity he redeemed them; and when by hard uſage they are grown ſo weak and feeble, that they can ſcarce go nor creep, why, he will carry them in his arms, and bare them. And thus he did of old; and his affections are rather greater then leſſer now, then they were then. The mother can be weary of carrying a dirty ſcreaming child; ſhe thinks it leſs trouble to whip him, or to let him lie till he hath cried himſelf weary; ſhe is loath to lug ſuch a troubleſome thing up and down all the day long. But yet ſuch is the tenderneſs of this father, that he carries his all the day long, though they be ſo heavy, ſo unquiet, ſo dirty. But of that preſently. How oft do you read of ſtrange pity in the book of the *Judges*; when they had by their own folly more then once brought themſelves into calamity, how do his bowels yern over them; and when any of his are groaning under any trials or temptation, what ſending and running is there? how many Cordials are prepared for them? what calling to this ſervant and that ſervant to attend them with all the care that may be, and to comfort them in this ſtate: and in caſe of abuſe, how doth he ſhew his love to them? If you ſhould ask *Pharaoh*, he would tell you, that Gods Friends are edge tools: why elſe doth the Lord lay about him with ſo much indignation, when they are oppreſſed. Nay, for their ſakes he rebukes Kings, ſaying, *Touch not mine Anointed, and do my Prophets no harm*; if they do, be it on their peril. How did he bare the afflictions of his people *Iſrael* in *Egypt*? did he ſtand ſtill as if he were unconcerned? did he ſhut his eyes and not ſee? or did he ſtop his

ears to their cries? No, no, he ſees, he ſees the ſufferings of his in *Egypt*, and that both enemies and friends too ſhall know the one to their comfort, and the other to their coſt, *Exod.* 3.7. How doth he awaken for their help, and gird on his ſword upon his thigh, and march out with fury? how doth he cloath himſelf with vengeance, as with a robe, and brandiſh his glittering ſword, and ſheath it in the hearts of his & their enemies? Wherefore is it that God hath ſo many controverſies with *Edom*, *Ammon*, and *Amalek*? Why doth he muſter up his forces with violence againſt *Babylon*? Whoſe quarrel doth he engage in? What was the ground of that War? If you read over all the Indictments that are before this great Judge, you will find this a common one, their hatred of his people; and this to be ſure he will not put up. And that which puts an Accent upon all this, is the unworthy carriage of moſt of them towards him all this while. But of that under the next *Head*, which is this.

Ninthly, He is the moſt patient Friend. Never any one in the world could have diſgeſted ſuch affronts, born ſuch indignities, as God hath many a time, and even from the beſt of thoſe that he takes into this intimacy with himſelf. Had it not been for this Covenant of Friendſhip, *Judah* and *Ephraim* too had been ſoon unpeopled; as for them they ſoon forgot their Covenant, yet for all that God remembers his; though *Ephraim* forget to be a Child, yet God can't forget to be a Father. Read that Text and wonder, *Hoſ.* 11. 7, 8. *And my people are bent to back ſliding: though they called them to the moſt high, yet none at all would exalt him.* Though they had many compaſſionate

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Prophets that called after them day and night, when they saw them turning their backs upon God, yet they were not minded. Who now would conceive that God should ever think a thought of kindness towards them more? yet hear what God saith, *How shall I give thee up, O* Ephraim? *how shall I deliver thee, O* Israel? *how shall I make thee as* Admah? *and how shall I set thee as* Zebulon? *My heart is turned within me, my repentings are kindled together. I will not execute the fierceness of mine anger. I will not return to destroy* Ephraim; *for I am God and not man, the holy One in the midst of thee, and I will not enter into the City.* Well, now tell me if ever there were such a compassionate, meek, patient Friend. *Ephraim* was up in open Arms against his maker, he did rebel most unworthily against his good Lord and Friend, to whom he was bound by infinite Engagements. *Ephraim* had quite cast off God, and he will have nothing to do with him; and *Judah* is not far inferiour to his treacherous Brother; and what will God do? One would think, as I said before, he should ease himself quickly of such false friends; one would think that after such unfaithfulness, he should for ever banish them his Court; one would soon conceive that he should think of disinheriting such rebellious Children; for theirs was not the first, second, nor third time that they had served God thus; who then could imagine that he should ever trouble himself with them any more? Should one not look every day when he should quite cast them off? Why, God seems sometimes to threaten as much, and seems ever and anon to act towards them as if he would never

never look upon them more while the world ſtands. Go ſaith God to your Idols, let them ſave you? what do you come to me; for you have refuſed to have me for your God; go cry to your gods, and let them deliver you. Thus he ſeems to turn away his face; yea, for all that, ſee how ſoon he forgets his diſpleaſure, *Ephraim* is his Child, his dear Child, and he can't but pitty him; and how ſhall I give thee up, O *Ephraim*, &c. how hardly is God brought ſo much as to chaſtiſe his children; he never corrects them, but when there is an abſolute need of it; ask the Church under the rod, and ſhe can't but ſay as much, *Lam.* 3. 32, 33. *For though he cauſe grief, yet will he have compaſſion according to the multitude of his mercies. For he doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men.* He calls judgment his work, his ſtrang work: and when he doth correct his ſtubborn children, how doth he many times give them a laſh and a kiſs, a frown, and a ſmile? O what would have become of the holieſt men living, if God ſhould upon every provocation have broke with them. If God ſhould mark iniquities, O who ſhould ſtand? Which of the fallen Sons of *Adam* hath not abuſed his high kindneſs? and yet for all that, how is his Patience and goodneſs exerciſed towards them; well might the Pſalmiſt make that the burden of one of his ſongs, *O that men would praiſe the Lord for his goodneſs, and for his wonderful works towards the children of men*; and that of another, *For his mercy endureth for ever.* What created being could have born the thouſandth part of, that from any hand that God doth every day from his deareſt children? What peeviſhneſs, and unfriendly quarrelling,

telling, what murmuring and repining, doth he bear, even from them for whom he hath done such great things? How strangly do they carry themselves! how seldom and complemental in their visits of him! how cold and formal in their addresses to him! how frequently are they conversing with his baseſt enemies! How much treachery and underhand-dealing doth he find in them! yet for all this, how great are his kindnesses, and how open are his arms, upon their acknowledgment, to receive them again! Little do we think what unkindnesses the Lord overlooks; and indeed except we knew what it was to be infinite in holiness, could we any way conceive how infinite his Patience is, *Psal.* 106. 43, 44. *Many times did he deliver them: but they provoked him with their counsel, and were brought low for their iniquities. Nevertheless he regarded their affliction, when he heard their cry, and he remembered for them his Covenant*, &c. Here, here's Patience, here's love and goodness with a witness! What Prince under heaven would trust a Rebell, that hath been in arms a hundred times against him, and that at the best doth serve him with so little delight? What friend would continue his familiarity and kindness there, where he hath found abundance of falsness? and who but thou, O God, is so merciful and gracious, Long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth? As for the trouble that any of his meet with, most commonly they may thank themselves for it; and it's always sent them in kindness: there is none of them all but may say, this is my iniquity, this is the fruit of my back-sliding, this I have got by my estrangment from God.

Thirdly,

 He is not [illegible] to be acquainted with him is the highest honour in the world. This word, honour, sounds great in the ears of this proud world; what running and catching to get a little of it! How do many undervalue their lives, and make nothing to hazard their blood for a little of that men call Honour; some prize it above riches and wealth, and care not almost at what rate they purchase it; and yet in the mean while they are furthest from that which they so greedily desire, and they run away from that which they seem to pursue. Poor ignorant man is fearfully mistaken, he calls that his honour which degrades him, and takes that for his glory which is his shame: How is he pleased with that which when he hath, he neither sees nor feels, and scarce knows what it is! (*Aug.*) What is it, O man, that thou looseſt thy sleep for? what is it that thou art at so much charge to buy? that rather then you will want it, Estate, Blood, Life and Soul, and all must go for it? Knight, Lord, Earl, &c. Worshipful, Right-worshipful, Honourable, Excellent, Gracious, are big words, and make a great noise, but is this the true honour? will these words without the thing do a man so much good? as many a fool, and so doth God say too, and death will make the biggest of them all know as much one as the long; for all those big words? what if his servants think that speaks these words, and his chamber-fellow, be not much sweeter. (*Answer.*) Is it such an honour to have a company of fools call him wise that it may be is like themselves? is it worth a Soul to have it said when I am dead, there lived a brave Gentleman, that

Noble house, and brave Table, his Cellar was always open, one might come when one would, and drink as long as one could stand, and never hear, why do you so? and be always welcome; that is in plain English, where a man might be incouraged to damn his Soul. There lived a Noble gallant Person who bid defiance to the Almighty, that had courage enough to go to hell merrily, and had a desire to carry as many along with him as might be; damning, swearing, cursing was their Language; eating, drinking, sleeping, whoring and persecuting the people of God their business. And are these your honourable Persons? Nay, Go higher, to bustle up and down in Cloth of Gold with a vast retinue; to have men on this side, and that side, bowing and cringing; and is this such a business? Is it worth the while to keep such a stir about that which a wise man may want, and a fool have? (*Anton.*) Will those Names, that Grandeur and state, those high Titles, render you more acceptable to God? will they procure you a freer access into the presence of that great King? will those great words scare death? will he say when he comes to your house, this is a person of quality, I must not be so bold as to come near him? will your honour procure you a protection from the arrests of this Serjeant? Where is the Honourable Personage, the Gentleman, Knight, Lord, King, or Monarch, that hath lived a thousand years? (*Lucian.*) Are the worms afraid to gnaw thy heart? Will this flesh never putrifie? Will your Servants, or your Master either honour you in Hell? And is this all that you keep so much a stir for, that can do you no good in the grave, or in another world? Can

that

that he better worth then Heaven, then God? O that we might but know what it is, that great thing is, which is preferred before Christ and everlasting glory? Again, I ask what is it that the Grandees of the world do so much idolize? is it to be called Wise, Great, and Noble? But what if the wise God call such a one a fool? (*Epist.*) What if he know neither himself, nor his God, nor his interest? Hath he much greater reason to boast then a feather that some body will say it is heavy, or dung, that the Swine saith it is sweet. (*Juven.*) What profit is it for a man to be made great for betraying his Country, and flattering a Tyrant, who yesterday was the son of a Stage-player, and to morrow shall be shorter by the head? What good will it do a beggar that is ready to be starved, to be told that he is a Prince, a brave fellow, worth some thousands by the year? But would you know which is the ready way to true honor? I tell you, it consists not in the favor of them that must die like themselvs, and before that few years be over, must stand but upon even ground with the meanest: it consists not in the sorry acclamations of them which measure a mans worth by his estate, and their dependance upon him; it consists not in the praise of them whose commendations some wise men have counted a discredit. But he hath shewed thee, O man, what is truly honourable; to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God, (*Micah* 6. 8. To bare relation to God as a Father, and to carry themselves as his Children, to be a Servant, and Friend of God, this, this is honourable, truly honourable, this is the height, the top of the Creatures preferment. To

converse with, and delight in his maker. To love, admire, and rejoyce in God, and to love God, to take complacency in the soul; this is something indeed, this is honour, a wise man would not grutch to venture his Estate, his Bloud, his All for this. And how few of the Gallants of the world understand the nature of this honour? How do most of them account that which is the only true badge of Nobility, a term of disgrace; and that which speaks a person highly honourable, and to have brave bloud running in his veins, to be low, sordid, and much beneath them; as if it were below a Creature to serve his Maker, and a pitiful preferment to be advanced to glory. O that men of parts and learning, that persons of Quality should be so mistaken! O what's become of their Reason? Is it an honour, a preferment for a man to become a brute? We are ready to pity mad men, and to laugh at fools; but whether there be not more reason to bemoan the condition of most of the honourable persons in the world, I leave Christ and Christians to judge. Well then, will you be informed after all this by him, who hath all preferments and honours in his gift, I mean the great King, and he will tell you that Glory and honour are in his presence, 1 Chron. 16. 27. Mans onely honour and true dignity lies in his nearness, and acquaintance with God. A practical knowledge of his maker is the Creatures greatest preferment. *David* was of the mind, that it was none of the lowest honours to be Gods servant, *Psal.* 84. It is upon the account of *Israels* near Relation to God that *Moses* reckons them the happiest, the most honourable people

in the world. Because God had avouched them to be his peculiar people, therefore they might well be said to be high above all the Nations which God had made, in praise, in name, and in honour, *Deut.* 26. 18, 19. And upon this account, might a wise man have his choice, whether he will wear a Crown, and be a stranger to God, or rags, and be one of his neerest servants; he will not stand long before he determine the case, he will soon answer with him, *That he had rather be a door-keeper in the house of God, then dwell in tabernacles of wickedness.* If mens actions may speak their Judgements, most of the Gallants of the world are of a far different opinion. But, O let me dwell for ever in his house, and stand always in his presence; happy are they that see his face, happy are they that behold his beauty. This, this mans Crown, this is his highest honour and dignity, for God to be mindful of man, and for his maker to visit him; this sets him but little below the Angels, this Crowns him with Glory and Honour, *Psal.* 8. 45. This is that which puts a true personal worth upon any one; and therefore the *Psalmist* thinks those the excellent persons, in whom is his delight. Upon this account the Scripture saith, *The righteous man, who is in covenant with God, is more excellent then his neighbour.* The pur-blind World, they judge altogether by the outward garb; they see the face, the rich apparel, they see the estate, but they see not that inward excellency and beauty that may be under but mean habit: they are ready to despise the Noble VVorthies of the VVorld, such as can look upon Kingdoms as small things in comparison of what they have an interest in.

who can call God Father, and Christ Brother. Have you never heard of a King in mean apparel, of a Prince without his Robes upon his back, or his Crown upon his head? and will you say that therefore he was but a common person? But those heavenly Creatures that have a more spiritual refined sense, that understands something of things and persons, are quite of another mind, they can look upon great ones in the midst of their gallantry, without a friend in Heaven, as mean persons that have no interest to speak of, and many of them, for all their greatness, to be in a far worse condition then Dogs and Toads. They can also look upon a poor despised Saint, a contemned Christian, though as to a carnal eye, he should look as if he could scarce speak sense, to be a favourite of Heaven, a person of quality; such a one as this he values as the Son of a King, a Citizen of *Zion*, one of the Royal Race, one of that glorious Retinue, that stand always in the presence of God to serve him, the least of which are Kings and Priests to their great Lord, *Rev.* 1.6. *By faith he sees their Crown, and looks upon that Royal Diadem, which shall ere long be put upon their princely heads.* This was the great preferment they sought, this was the honour they most desired; as for the world and all its glory, they can well spare it for those that shall never be advanced to any higher dignity, to any better preferment. As for the Saint, as contemptible as he looks, he hath higher designs, nobler things, greater honours in his eye; and if that which the world so admires were the highest glory that a rational creature were capable of, the top of mans preferment, why then he could look upon brutes them-

themſelves as his equals, except in this, that their pleaſures are more certain, and their miſeries leſs underſtood.

It is ſtoried of *Conſtantine* and *Valentinian* two Roman Emperours, that they ſubſcribed themſelves *Vaſſellos Chriſti*, the vaſſels of Chriſt; and that *Numa Pompilius* eſteemed it a higher honour to be a *Friend* of *God*, then a *Lord* of *Men*. Conſider poor ſinner, conſider what honours you ſlight, what preferments you refuſe, what dignity you undervallue, when you make light of acquaintance with God. Had that brave Stoick, *Epictetus* I mean, known God in Chriſt, he would much more have wondered at the inconſiderateneſs of them which make nothing of being related to God as a Father, he would much more have pitty'd them which cleave to their lower, meaner kindred, beaſt, who had rather be like Swine then God, and rather be companions to their ſervants then their Maker. Seems it to you but a light matter to be a Kings Son? is it but a ſmall matter, think you, to call God Father? is it nothing to be born to a Crown Immortal, that fadeth not away? This is honour, this is preferment worth the having, worth the looking after, worth the venturing ones life for. This is true Nobility to ſtand thus nearly related to him, before whom the Angels do vail their glorious Faces, and at whoſe feet the four and twenty Elders lay their Crowns. The queen of *Sheba* thought *Solomons* Servants happy, who ſtood always in his preſence, and heard his wiſdom; but what would ſhe have ſaid, had ſhe but known the Honour and Glory of this Prince! O bleſſed are thoſe that ſtand always in thy preſence

O God, blessed are thy servants, blessed are those which see thy Glory, and hear thy wisdom, blessed are they that may have free access to thee. O let me have this preferment, though I live like *Job* at his lowest, and dye like *Lazarus*. Let others sue for the favour of Princes, let them make the best of what the world can give, let them desire that which hath been dangerous to more then *Haman*; I hope I should never envy them, might I but have more frequent and intimate converse with God, may I be but acquainted with him; O may I have but a heart more to admire, love and delight in him, and serve him with the strength and intenseness of my Soul while I am here, and stand for ever in his presence, and behold his glorious Face with joy hereafter. O my Soul what meanest thou, that thou still speakest so faintly and coldly of such infinitely glorious things? Why doth not a new life animate thee at the very mention of these things? Hast thou not far more cause to raise up thy desponding Spirits with chearfulness, then old *Jacob*, when his Son *Joseph*, who was Lord of that Land, sent for him into *Egypt*? Thy Father O my Soul, thy brother is Lord, not of *Egypt*, nor of *Goshen*, but of *Eden*, of *Zion*; he is the King of that glorious City, the new *Jerusalem*; Heaven is his Throne, and Earth is his Foot-stool, and yet behold the waggons that he hath sent for thee, behold the provision that he hath sent to maintain thee comfortably in thy journey from *Egypt* to *Canaan*; is not this enough? O my Soul awake, up and see him before thou dyest; behold, he is coming, the Bridegroom is coming, *Joseph* is coming, to meet thee with a gallant

Train,

Train, in a glorious Equipage; It is but yet a little while, and thy husband will come and fetch thee in Royal State, attended with a numberless retinue of Saints and Angels. O hadst thou but an eye to behold their Chariots and Horsemen coming upon the mountains; he is coming, he is coming, he will be here quickly, he will not tarry, he is at the door. Contemplate sometimes on these things, and a little antedate that Glory by Spiritual meditation, do but think what a brave sight that will be to see the mountains covered with Chariots of fire, and Horses of fire, when the heavens shall bow before thy friend, and the earth shall melt at his presence, and yet thy heart not faint within thee; when the King shall come in the Clouds to fetch his Friends to his own house, where they shall dwell for ever. This honour have all the Saints.

Eleventhly, He is a suitable friend. It is suitableness that sweetens Society. I can easily believe, a poor Country Peasant can take as much content in the company of a poor man like himself, as in the Society of a Prince; an unlearned Country man is no way fit to converse with Courtiers, and States-men; the vastness of the distance would so much swallow his mind, and the unsuitableness of his Spirit to such company takes off that content which otherwise he might enjoy. But yet in Spirituals, though the distance between God and man be beyond a possibility of our conception, and the disproportion infinite; yet the Soul of man being immediately from God, and Spiritual like God, and having a Divine new Nature infused into it by the Spirit in Regene-

Regeneration, it finds an infinite suitableness, pleasure and content in the injoyment of Gods presence, and it is not sunk, but raised by an Union, converse and Society with it's maker. The truth of it is, did man but understand his own Original aright, he would think it infinitely below his noble Parentage to converse with, and have intimate delightful Society with any but God, and those which bare the same relation to God with himself, or to bring poor strangers acquainted with him as well as themselves. There is not a match upon earth fit for the soul of man to be matched to: but in that other Country there is a match indeed every way suitable, a Spirit for a Spirit, an everlasting God for an everlasting Soul, a precious Jesus for a precious soul, a holy God for those which he hath made holy like himself; and that is none of the least of mans happiness, that notwithstanding that infinite distance that is Naturally between him and his God, yet that God should make in his Creature such Noble Dispositions, and such Divine Qualifications, that there should be the greatest suitableness in the world between God and the Soul, and the Soul and God; and they both take wonderful content in the enjoyment of one another. This is in part here, but compleated in Glory. This we may find oft in Scripture expressed in the neareſt Relations, and deareſt Affections. Hence God is said to be a Father, and they his Children; a Husband, and they his Spouse. Now what greater suitableness can there be then between Father and Children, Husband and Wife? God is also said to delight in them, and they in him; to rejoyce in their company, and they in his; and

how

how could this be, except there were a ſuitableneſs in them one to another. Their wills are ſuited; what God wills they will, and what God loves they love; and ſo what they love, as his Friends, God loves; one doth not thwart and contradict the other. O how ſweet then muſt the company, the communion of ſuch Friends be! O were our hearts as they ſhould be! Were we more like God, we ſhould quickly experience the unſpeakable joy of our ſouls, how ſuitable a Friend he is to a ſoul; we ſhould ſoon find, that as clay and ſtones are as unſuitable food for the body, ſo the world is unſuitable food for the ſoul to feed on, and that it is God alone that can fill and ſatisfie the vaſt deſires of it. O, I ſay again, were we but as we came out of our Makers hands, or rather were we trimmed up in our eldeſt brothers Robes, and brought into the immediate preſence of this great King, were we ſet before that glorious Throne, where the infinite brightneſs of his Majeſty ſhines ſo that the Angels themſelves do vail their faces before him; yet for all that we ſhould not long ſtand ſilent, as if the place and company were unſuitable to us, it would not be long before we ſhould carry it as thoſe that were nearly related, and had intimate acquaintance with him that ſits upon the Throne. O the unſpeakable ſweetneſs that will be in the enjoyment of his company! no tediouſneſs, no irkſomneſs at all upon our Spirits. We ſhall quickly underſtand our work, our privilege. O infinite goodneſs! O boundleſs love! O let me be always ſolacing my Soul in the contemplation of theſe things! O let the very thoughts of them be a Heaven upon earth to my ſoul! But

here,

here, O here's the grief while we are here in a strange Country, there is something (in all the poor fallen children of *Adam*, nay, in those of them that are recovered, and by grace brought into a re-union with God) there is, I say, something in God unsuitable to them, and in them unsuitable to God; and this, O this, makes our lives so uncomfortable: but converse with God will wear off a great deal of that. When thou comest to lay off thy rags, and to put off thy old suit, and to put on that new one that is making for thee, I mean after death, when thou comest to glory, thou wilt find the case strangely altered with thee. In Heaven there will be a perfect Harmony, Suitableness and Agreement between God and thee for ever; and thou wilt take infinite complacency and delight in him, and he in thee. And thus shalt thou spend Eternity in unconceivable joy, delight and pleasure. This is Heaven, a perfect suitableness to God, and enjoying him for ever. O when, when, when shall it once be! *Come Lord Jesus, come quickly, Come, O blessed Father by thy Spirit, and burn up what is unlike thee! O create a greater suitableness between my soul and thee! O come thou down to me, or take me up to thee!* O could we but talk with one of those happy Creatures that hath been in the very presence of God in glory, and should we ask him, whether he were not weary of the same work, of the same company, the same place; what answer do you think he would make you? No more weary then a man upon the Rack, but just before would be of perfect ease; no more then a healthful hungry man is of eating; no more weary then the Sun is of running, then the

Fire

Fire of ascending, or a Stone of falling towards the Center. *Sen. Epist.* &c. *I know not whether I had rather be there with him. I was once upon Earth as you are now, and now I am in Heaven, and in neither of both these places can I find out that I can take more delight in then God.* I must say as he, *Psal.* 73. 24. *Whom have I in Heaven but him? and there is none upon earth that I can desire in comparison of him.* I can't desire a better employment then a delightful constant attending upon my God: Can I have better company then such a Father? Can a greater happiness be conceived then Eternal Glory, a pleasanter place then Heaven? That which I can speak, you can't hear; and could you (though in this perfect glory) I can't express what you will find and feel when you come hither. O had I but known so much as I do now, when I was in your condition upon earth, I should with incomparably greater earnestness have sought after acquaintance with God then I did. *In his presence is fulness of joy, at his right hand are pleasures for evermore.* Now I feel, now I know it: I thought one smile sweet upon earth, but now I see and feel infinitely more; what you enjoy now, is a shadow, in comparison of what you will enjoy hereafter. O what do you mean, that you prize his favour no more, that you get no more intimate acquaintance with him? What do you mean that you are so unwilling to come to this place of joy? O, were you but possest of what I speak of, you would say what I say, you would never be weary of praising and serving him, you would never wish your self out of his presence, and think it not possible to be in more suitable society. Is it so, O my soul, what then doest

thou

thou here? Make haste, O my soul, stay no longer here below, but know thy priviledge, understand where thy comforts are.

Twelfthly, He is a wise Friend. All the men and women in the world have great, mighty affairs to manage; and they want Skil, Wisdom and Discretion for the right management of these things, they are wofully to seek as to their great business; they are wise to do evil, but in Spirituals they are become stupid, sottish fools, and as to the carrying on of their great work, they do it with the greatest imprudence in the world: and they will most certainly for ever undo themselves, except one that is wiser then themselves undertake to help them. All things go backward with them, and they labour in the very Fire whilst they act without God, and it is impossible it should be otherwise as long as there is such a disproportion between mans business, and his Spirit; Man is carnall, and his work is Spiritual. Would an ignorant poor Creature that is but one remove above a beast, be fit to manage the great matters of Government? How ridiculously would he behave himself in a Chair of State? how strangely would an unlearned man bungle, should he go about to open one of the profound Demonstrations of Mathematicks! But a natural man is far more unskilful then any of these, as to the carrying on of that great Imployment that he hath to look after, while he is on this side Eternity; his business is to serve his Maker, but what pitiful work doth he make of it? Man is made for an everlasting State, he is sent into this world to provide for another; a Good, a happiness there is, which he is to look

after,

after; he once had a faire eſtate, but he hath ſpent and loſt it all, and he is to ſee to the recovering of it again. He hath been in arms againſt his lawfull Soveraign, and been guilty of the higheſt Treaſon, and thereby hath forfeited his Life, his Soul; now he hath his pardon to ſue out, and how doth he go to work in this one thing? to mention no more. Why he goes to beg a pardon arm'd Cap-a-pe, and with his Sword drawn; he comes to ask pardon for one Treaſon and he is found acting of another. *Lord have mercy upon me, and give me leave to break thy Laws*, is the ſum of all his prayers. He talks of Heaven, and yet makes all the haſte he can to Hell; he is told he is out of the way, but he laughs at him that tells him ſo; and that's his beſt; Sometimes he rages, and deſires with all ſpeed to remove him that would ſet him in the road to *Sion*; he calls for a Hatchet to cut down the bough upon which himſelf ſtands. And this is your man of Wiſdom. The man is under ſail in the midſt of of Rocks and Sands; and if he would but look, he might ſee many doleful Spectacles, the tops of Maſts, ſhip-wracked ſouls I mean; and though the Pilots tell him of the danger, yet he ſayes, he will never believe but that's the beſt and ſafeſt road to the harbour, and ſo on he goes as if he were ſure he could not miſcarry; and all this while he will not be perſwaded but that he acts very wiſely; he judgeth it one of his greateſt comforts, that he runs to miſery without any hinderance; and how can it otherwiſe be, except men were ſpiritually wiſe? and who can teach man this wiſdom? who ſhall inſtruct him? who ſhall help him, now his affairs are upon the matter

ter almost desperate? why, if thou wilt but hear, here is one that will yet undertake their foul cause; if you will be advised by him, for this he will set all at right. And O how doth he call after you! how willing to give you his advice! how desirous to assist you, *Prov.* 1. 20, &c. *Wisdom cryeth without, she uttereth her voyce in the streets: She cryeth in the chief places of concourse, in the openings of the Gates, she uttereth her words, saying: How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity? And ye scorners delight in scorning, and fools hate Knowledge? Turn ye at my reproof: Behold, I will pour out my Spirit upon you, I will make known my words unto you.* And will you set at naught all his Counsels, and have none of his reproofs? Will you rather be ruined then be beholding to him for advice? Let me put in one word; if this wise Counsellor be not for you, he will be against you, and if you find any that can order your sad affairs more to your advantage; I pray make use of him but if you will be ruled by him, you can't miscarry, as ill a condition as you are in; though thou beest quite broke, yet he will give you such a stock as that you may set up again, and such directions as that you can't but thrive, if you will but follow them. It is he that teacheth his Spiritual Frugality, not to part with that for a trifle, which will be a rich commodity ere long; it is he who perswades us to make the best use of every thing; it is he that teacheth Fools more true wisdom then the great Politicians of the World, though the world judge them weak, yet they have wit enough to make a good bargain, to value Heaven before Hell, to flye from everlasting burnings. They are wise enough to know

what is for their real advantage, and what not. This is he that would bring thee acquainted with him, it is he who give his ſo much underſtanding, as to know the true worth of things; and the difference between good and evil, finite and infinite, time and eternity. Who is it that *David* goes to for counſel, when his politick Enemies combined againſt him? where doth he adviſe? who brings him out of all his intricacies? Is it not He that I am perſwading you to go to, who was never out witted, who can eaſily turn the counſel of *Achitophels* into fooliſhneſs; It is he who can infatuate the great Sages of the World, and make them weaker then children in their Counſels. And this is he who will be a conſtant Counſellor to all thoſe that are his friends, his acquaintance. *Seneca, Epiſt.* 41. 81. gives excellent counſel indeed, which if we will preciſely follow, our matters can't but ſucceed: *Art thou never in any ſtraights? are all thy affaires carryed on with ſo much prudence, both as to time and eternity, that thou ſtandſt in no need of advice? Art thou ſure that this will always be thy condition? If not, Why then wilt thou not be perſwaded to ſtrike in here?* Why if you will believe them, which to their comfort have tryed him again, and again, it is your unſpeakable intereſt and wiſdom to get God for your Friend, and then whatſoever you do, ſhall proſper by his advice: a poor Chriſtian, can outwit all the policy of Hell, and ſhew himſelf more wiſe then thoſe which call himſelf Fool, and count him mad, *Pſal.* 73. 24. *David* durſt truſt none elſe to guide him; but with his conduct he doth not fear but that he

shall come safe to his journeys end, *Thou shalt guide me by thy counsels, and bring me to thy glory.* And again he saith, by the help of this Counsellour he was wiser then his teachers, *Psal.* 119. 18. Hear therefore what you had best to do as matters stand with you, *Prov.* 4. 11 *He will teach thee in the way of wisdom: he will lead thee in the right paths. When thou goest, thy steps shall not be straightned, and when thou runnest, thou shalt not stumble, &c.* 1 Cor. 1. 15. *Because the foolishness of God is wiser then men.* That which looks most contemptibly, if throughly understood, will be found to have more depth in it then the wisest men of the world can reach. To choose such a friend, this is wisdom, this is prudence. The godly man knows that he hath a great cause to be decided ere long, and that it will be no lost labour to make the Judge his friend. Well what say you sinners, is this considerable that I do now propound, or is it not? Can you plead your own cause, can you clear your title to glory without him; if not, be well advised before you slight such a motion, as I now do make to you.

13. He is an immortal Friend. I, that's a Friend indeed. If one friend could be sure to live just as long as the other; and were friends sure never to want the advice, comfort, society, and help one of another, it would not a little advance the worth of a friend. But where is such a one to be found? What Histories can give us an account of such amities? Let persons be united in never so close an union, conjoyned in the fastest knot that nature can tie: yet death will First or last dissolve it. So that sometimes I have

have been almoſt of this mind, as to all worldly friends, conſidering them abſtract from God (for grace in any friend doth unſpeakably ſweeten the relation, and ſuch a relation will not die) if we compare the ſhortneſs and uncertainty of poſſeſſing, and the bitterneſs in looſing, with the ſweetneſs of enjoying; that it's ſomewhat difficult to reſolve, whether ſuch ſhort-liv'd comforts are worth the looking after. Not but that I think a friend, a true friend, a great mercy, and much to be deſired; but really, if our affections be not for Gods ſake, if our love be not regulated by Religion, I can eaſily believe that the bitterneſs in loſing doth over-ballance the pleaſure in enjoying. And who would much trouble himſelf to get that with care, which muſt be poſſeſt with fears, and will be parted with with tears. All worldly enjoyments will ſerve us thus. When we expect moſt from them, and pleaſe our ſelves to think what content we enjoy in them, ten to one, if God love us, but that he either imbitters, or takes away that comfort from us. One ſaith, I had a dear Husband, ſuch a one as never woman had, but he is dead, I have loſt him. Another ſaith, I had a precious Child, a Brother, but he is gone. And every body will be in this note, firſt or laſt. And if the caſe be thus, who would be ſo fooliſh as to let out the ſtrength of his ſoul, upon that which he may ſoon be deprived of. But here, here's a friend whom you need not fear over-loving nor loſing, a never dying friend, one that will be ſure to out-live you. (*Ar. Epic. l. 3. c. 22.*) *Say of what you will, that it is mortal, and you have diſgraced it enough; for how can*

that be of any great worth which can die, and when I have most need of it I may want; but this can't be said of God, he only is Immortal, and not subject to changes. As for the favour of Princes and Great Ones, at the best, it is but an uncertainty; for it may be all thy hopes are bound up in his life, and that hour which puts an end to his days, puts a period to thy comfort? But it is another kind of friend, that I would have you acquainted with. O why do Christians dote upon that which is so short-liv'd? Make but choice of this friend, and you shall never say of him, he is dead, I have lost him. *Wherefore put not your trust in the son of man, in whom there is no help; for his breath goeth forth, and he returneth to his earth.* —— *But happy is he that hath the God of* Jacob *for his help, whose hope and love is fixed upon the Lord his God, which made Heaven and Earth,* &c. *That God who is called the Living God,* Psal. 146. 3, 4, 5, 6.

14*thly*, He is a present friend, a friend that is always in all places. Mans condition may possibly be such, as that he may be deprived of the company of his dearest worldly relations, he may be sequestred from the society of his most helpful and necessary friends! How oft have the dear children of God been clapt up in Dungeons, not onely from the sight, but from the knowledge of their most affectionate acquaintance? It's no unusual thing for them to be banished from their Native Country. Wives and Children, among Savage Men and Beasts; they have no man to make their complaints to, but such as will increase their sorrows. How frequently may they be in such a condition, as that they may not see, hear, or speak to any friend? What

Bolts

Bolts and Bars, what Walls and Guards to keep them from them, which if they could not free them from, yet might in ſome meaſure alleviate their miſery? But now God is ſuch a friend, who cannot, who will not be kept out from his by Walls of Braſs, or bars of Iron, he will find out his friends in the darkeſt hole, and bare them company there in ſpite of all the powers of Hell. O how reviving are his viſits? What Cordials doth he bring along with him. This is that which makes the people of God ſo very chearful, when their enemies make account their condition is ſuch, as that it hath no mixture of joy or comfort in it. Was that a Priſon or Heaven where thoſe Martyrs were ſinging Halelujahs? Was that a time to be ſo merry, when all the world diſowned them, when they were loaded with reproaches, and irons, and chains, counted the troublers of the nation, madmen, hereticks? The caſe is clear: the ſight of this friend made them forget their Scorns, and think their chains Gold, and their priſon Liberty. It was God that ſpake it, and he hath been found to be as good as his word, *Iſa.*43.1,2. *Thus ſaith the Lord that created thee, O* Jacob, *and that formed thee, O* Iſrael, *Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name, thou art mine. When thou paſſeſt thorow the the waters I will be with thee: and thorow the rivers, they ſhall not overflow thee: when thou walkeſt thorow the fire, thou ſhalt not be burnt; neither ſhall the flame kindle upon thee.* Who was that which bore the three Children company in the fiery Furnace? VVho was that which went into the Lions Den to viſit *Daniel*? VVho brought *Paul* alive to the

ſhore when the ſhip in which he went was wrack't? VVas it not this Friend that I am now ſpeaking of? I might be large in reciting the miraculous preſervations which God hath vouchſafed to his, which is a manifeſt token of his preſence; when none can come near, beſides, he will not be far off. In the greateſt extremities, when none durſt own them, then God reckons it time for him to ſhew himſelf. It was not for nothing that the *Pſalmiſt* could ſpeak ſo chearfully when others were quaking, *Pſal.* 46. 12, &c. VVhat was it that bore up his ſpirits, when there were ſuch dreadful Commotions? VVhat refuge hath he to ſhelter himſelf under in time of ſuch Calamity? In what doth his ſtrength lie that he is ſo confident? VVhence doth he expect a ſupply, that he holds it out ſo bravely, when his enemies are ſo numerous, and his Friends ſo ſcarce? VVhy, *David* hath his inviſible Friends, as well as viſible enemies. Ask him, and he will tell you, That God is his refuge and ſtrength, and he is his confidence, and he will come in when he hath the greateſt need; he will be a very preſent help in trouble. And that is the reaſon that *David* will not fear, though the ſtorm were far greater then ever yet he was in, though the earth were removed, and the mountains were caſt into the midſt of the ſea; though the foundations of the earth were ſhaken, though the ſea ſhould roar and threaten the earth with another deluge, he can ſleep as ſecurely as a perſon little concerned; and this he can ſpeak, not only for himſelf, but for the whole city of God; God is in the midſt of her, ſhe ſhall not be moved. The Saint

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hath a Friend that will bare him company in al places, in all dangers, and in his company he need not be afraid. Let the leaſt child that God hath, give but one cry, and he will ſoon awake. It can't but be ſo from the ſpirituality of his nature, the immenſity of his being, and the infiniteneſs of his love. It was Orthodox Divinity and Doctrine that *Ar. Epictetus l. 2. c. 14.* preached (though but a Heathen) when he ſaid, *That the firſt leſſon that became a wiſe man to learn, was, that there was a God, and then, that nothing in the world could be concealed from him, and that he knew not only our outward actions, but our moſt ſecret workings, our cloſeſt curtain buſineſſes, and not only ſo, but even our thoughts, projects and principles: which ſpeaks him every where, and conſequently ready at hand to help his Friends at a dead lift. Wherefore* (ſaith the ſame Author, *Idem. l. 3. c. 22.*) *think not that thou art alone when thou art in thy chamber, in thy bed, when thy curtains are drawn, when thou art lock'd up in a priſon never ſo dark under ground; if thou art good, thou ſhalt have two companions in ſpight of the malice of all thy enemies, a good Conſcience, and thy God.* This made that brave Moraliſt to dare his enemies to do their worſt to exclude his Friends from him. *Can* (ſaith he) *any man be baniſhed out of the world? whereſoever you ſend me, there will be the Sun, Moon, and Stars, but if not, God is there, I am ſure, with whom I may talk, to whom I may pray; he will bare me company, though all the reſt of my Friends be kept from me, And as long as you can't baniſh me from God, nor keep him from me, I ſhall reckon my ſelf at liberty; and ſhould I be ſent out of this world into another, even there I ſhould find my Friend; and he will ſcarce complain that is removed from*

a place where almost all are his enemies, to a place where quite all are his Friends. One would have thought these poor Heathens had been reading *Psalm.* 139. Do you hear O Christians, what language those forementioned persons speak? and shall these that never had the thousandth part of that advantage for the knowing of God, speak and act thus, and shall Christians have such low thoughts of God? because we do not see God, shall we therefore not believe that he is present every where? he that denies Gods own presence, had upon the matter as good deny his being; for were it not so, how could he Judge the world with Justice? How could all things be sustained by his power? God takes this as a very high indignity, that any should in the least question this glorious attribute, *Jer.* 23. 23, 24. *Am I a God at hand, and not a God a far off? Can any hide himself in secret places, that I shall not see him, saith the Lord? Do not I fill Heaven and Earth, saith the Lord.* And is not this a Friend worth the having, who will be sure not to be absent when you have need of him? the wicked indeed say, how doth God know, and can he see through the thick Clouds, and therefore they sin with confidence, and oppress the Friends of God without any fear; they hope God doth not behold, they think omniscience knows not. I wish there were not something too like this sometimes in the thoughts of Gods people too; but let me only leave that one Scripture with the first sort, *Psal.* 94. 9, &c. *He that planted the ear, shall he not hear? He that formed the eye, shall he not see? He that teacheth man knowledge, shall not he know. The Lord knoweth*

knoweth, &c. As for the desponding Christian that begins to think God is out of the reach of his Prayers, let me ask thee, O thou of little Faith, when did God ever absent himself from his in a time of need? When was he quite out of the hearing of their cry? I know indeed he may hide himself, yet then he is near them also, to try their love, and hear their voice, for God loves to hear his children cry; (earthly Parents may correct their children for crying, but God chastiseth his children usually for their silence.) When he seems furthest off, he is but behind the Curtain, he is there where he with pleasure sees how earnestly his children look up and down for him: and then when they are ready to sit down weeping as if they had lost their Father; when they think they are quite forgot, and their enemies begin to triumph, and to ask, where now is your God? Then he lets both friends and foes know that he is near. And what say you to all this, you that as yet are strangers to God? Have you gotten such a friend as he is, that will always be at your elbow, that can and will come to help you (when other friends are far enough off,) whether man will or no? have you got such a friend? If not, why then will you not now accept of his acquaintance, who will be such a friend to all that love him? No good man is without the company of God, he walks with God, he talks with God, he eats with God, he drinks with God, and is entertained by him, and he sleeps in his Arms. God is with him in his Shop, in the Rode, at Home and Abroad, and who can miscarry that hath so helpful a companion always with him? When thy burdens are too heavy,

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do but complain, and he will either take them off thy back, or put under his own shoulders, and help thee to go away lightly with them, he will assist thee in six troubles, and in seven he will give thee help.

15. He is a Soul Friend, Soul friends are the best friends. As soul affairs are the mightiest affairs; so those that give us the greatest help in those matters ought to be valued. God is the great Soul Friend; expect not to find him a friend to thy lust, this scares the wicked from him, who would be glad to be acquainted with God, if he would gratifie their lusts, and please their wicked humors, and give them eternal happiness after a life of wickedness, that is, would ungod himself for their sakes. But hold there man; you shall sooner see the Sun black, and have fire cold, and find a heaven in hell, then have God a friend to your Sin. God doth not promise to furnish all his acquaintance with provision for their sensuality, he will not put a knife into thy hands to stab himself, or to cut thy own throat. There are too many of such friends in the world, and men are generally so foolish as to count them friends, which deserve another name; these are they which help men to hell, and shew them the shortest cut to eternal misery, and this must go for a special kindness. Sure men and women will scarce be always of this mind. Must poison in a guilded cup go for a cordial, and a kiss, though with a dagger, be taken for true love. *Seneca* had more wit then to reckon such among benefactors. He that can teach me the way to true happiness, he that can help me to adorn, dress and trim my Soul; he by whose instructions

I shall be more in love with vertue, and out of love with sin; he by whose directions I may be acquainted with my self, and made truly to value that which is really most excellent, this shall be my friend, this shall be my companion. And where are such friends to be found? How few of them in the world? Do not most, that go under that sweet name of friends, do one another the greatest unkindness that can be imagined! How do they incourage one another in an evil way, *Pro.* 1. *Psal.* 2. How do men tug and pull to get one another apace into damnation; and if the wise world may be Judges, none must go for a friend, but he that would do me most mischief; none must be counted an enemy, but he that desires to do me the most reall kindnesses. This sounds strangely: yet for all that, did it lie in my way, I could easily prove it. Yet I must confidently affirm, that every ones experience, first or last will say as much. Something of this I have taken notice of in my conversing with dying men. I remember, once more particularly, being by a poor Creature that was just a going into another world, one of his old friends looked in to see him, at the sight of which person he gnashed his teeth, and could not indure him in the room, but cry out, this was he that brought me to this, I may thank him, or I had not been in so sad a condition upon a death-bed. But this by the by. Open enemies are better then such friends. I say again, do not expect to have God such a friend. God loves his too well to let them undo themselves; he knows the worth of Souls, and pitties them that would part with their souls for a trifle, and therfore he tells men plainly, that

which

which may be really prejudicial to the health of their Souls; he can't but let them know what is food, and what is poiſon: what elſe is the meaning of thoſe vehement expoſtulations? Why doth he ſend ſo many meſſengers one after another? To what purpoſe elſe doth he tender ſuch promiſes, ſuch incouragement? Be it known therefore unto thee O man, if thou underſtand'ſt the worth of thy own Soul, and would'ſt have that Soul of thine do well for ever, and would'ſt have a friend for thy Soul, that there is but one ſuch a friend to be found in the whole world, and that is God. O haſt thou no regard at all for thy precious and immortal Soul? Doſt thou never think of that excellent thing within thee? Doſt thou not care though thy Soul ſtarve, be naked and miſerable for ever? Is it nothing to thee, that thy Soul hath not ſo much as a ſhelter to hide it ſelf under, when a dreadful ſtorm ſhall riſe, and death ſhall turn it out of his old Tenement? Doſt thou not believe that it muſt have a being ſomewhere for ever, and that either in everlaſting glory or eternal burnings? and are theſe ſmall matters with you? What will you for all this take no care in the world about theſe grand affairs? Had a ſpecial friend committed but a Dog to thee to take care of, you would have thought your ſelf engaged in gratitude and honour, to have ſuited your care of him, to your reſpect to the perſon from whom you had him. (*Epict.*) *But doſt thou not know, O man, that thy God hath committed a Soul to thy care, and hath told thee what thou ſhalt do to preſerve the life and health of this thy ſoul, that it may be in good plight when he ſhall call for it. He doth tell thee what is its moſt natural food, and what*

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is not wholsome. He tells thee what thou shalt do to have that soul within thee everlastingly happy. And is all this of so little consequence, as to go in at one ear and out at the other? Are these things to be indifferent in? If mans soul were like the soul of a beast, the case were altered; if when his breath went out of his body there were an end of him, the matter were the less considerable; if he had ever a friend in another world, that could do as much for him as God can do, I should have little to say in this business. But since this is impossible, how can I bare to see thee neglect the making sure of such a friend? How can a Christian with any patience think, that those that he lives with, and dearly loves, should miss of such a friend, without whom their souls must be everlastingly miserable. If it were only for your bodies or estates I should scarce use so many words, neither I believe need I; but when it is for your souls and eternity, who can be silent? Once more consider what a friend thou mayst have; it is a friend for thy soul. Alas man, it is thy soul, thy precious soul that lies at stake; that Spirit within thee, which is more worth then a world; it is that which is in hazard, and here is a friend that offers thee to make that soul of thine happy for ever. Thy soul hath abundance of enemies: Some would debase it, others would rob thee of it, others would clap up a hasty match between that Noble Creature and a Servant, the World, I mean: and there are very few that have any true kindness for it, and thou knowest not the worth of that Jewel, thy Soul; but here, here's a friend, if thou wilt but leave it with him, he will take care of it, it shall not be marred away for

nothing

nothing. Here's one will do that for its ſecurity, honour and happineſs, that all the world beſides can't do. If therefore thou haſt any love for thy poor ſoul, if thou ſetteſt any price upon that precious thing within thee; in a word, if thou wouldſt have thy ſoul do well in another world, O ſtrike in here, cloſe with theſe tenders, liſten to the counſel of him who offers you the beſt advice in the world. He, he it is that now offers thee that thou canſt never value enough; he it is that will feed, cloath, and portion that ſoul of thine, and after that marry thee to his onely Son, by which match you will be made for ever. O did men and women but know what a ſoul is, did they imagine what a dreadful miſcarriage of a ſoul is, did they but in any meaſure underſtand the things of their peace, could they but conceive what God could and would do for their ſouls, I need to ſpend but little time in perſwading them to commit their ſouls to him, to be acquainted with him, who will be ſure to take ſpecial care of their ſouls, that they may do well, whatever is neglected. O could you but ſee, did you but know what a ſad taking they are in, that go into the other world with a poor naked ſoul, and know no body in the world there, and have never a friend that doth take any notice of them, you would then think I ſpoke what I do with reaſon enough, and that my words were too ſhort, and my expoſtulations too faint in a matter of ſuch concernment. O ſinners, I tell you, nay, God tells you ſoul-matters are the greateſt matters in the world. I am ſure Chriſt thought ſo, or elſe he would not have been at ſo much coſt about them; thoſe that are in their wits and under-

understand themselves, they know as much too, and so will you, ere a few years, it may be hours, be past. Those that now make but a pish of all this, when they have been but one quarter of an hour in another world, will say as I do, that a Soul-friend is the only Friend, and that Soul concerns are the great concerns, things of weight and moment indeed; and that it would have quitted the cost to have taken some pains to have look'd out for such a one that could have stood the soul in some stead in that other world; and that above all it would have been no folly nor madness to have accepted of the kindness of one that desired earnestly to be acquainted with them, and to do their soul a good turn. O that they had but been so considerate, as to have embraced such a motion when it was offered! And this brings me to the next Qualification of this Friend.

16. He is a necessary Friend. There is an absolute necessity of being acquainted with him. It's possible for a man that hath very few friends upon earth, to live as happily as he that hath many. Multitude of acquaintance, such as they are, may contribute much to a mans care and sorrow. And as for most friends, such as are commonly so called, it is better to have their room then their company. A man may live without the acquaintance of Nobles, he may be as free, chearful, and rich without the knowledge of such as them. One may live holily, and die joyfully, and may be happy for ever, though he never saw the face of a Prince, though he was never at Court, though he lived and died a stranger to all worldly friends. One may be disown-

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ed by his Father, hated by his mother, slighted by all his Relations, and have never a friend under the Sun that will own him, and yet for all that be in a state of truer felicity, then those, that are daily attended with troops of visitors, whose gates are seldom shut, whose houses are never empty: but amongst all that comes, God never comes to them, as for his company they are strangers to it; this man I may write miserable for all his great and many friends. And him that hath the company of God in acquaintance with his Redeemer i'le call happy, though he have never a friend in the world besides. Multitude of friends seldom add much to our comforts, but always to our cares. A man may go to Hell for all his great acquaintance with men; but it's impossible, if we are greatly acquainted with God, to miss of Heaven. When men are unkind, if God be kind, it's well ballanced; but if God frown, whose smiles can comfort? I may be happy, though I am very little in mans favour; but it's impossible to be happy without Gods favour. To be a stranger to God, is to be a stranger to peace, joy, heaven. O it's sad being without God! If I should declare the Judgement of most in the world, at least if their practice may speak for them, they see very little need of acquaintance with God. They do not write, *Must*, upon the things of Religion. They must eat, they must drink, they must sleep, and if they want any of these things, they count themselves in a sad condition. But further, they must riot, they must be drunk, they must whore, they must have what their lust calls for, let it be what it will, they must get into the favour of such and such a great

person

perſon whoſe diſpleaſure they have incurred? These are things that the world ſay muſt be; they are reckoned among the neceſſary things: but they do not ſay they muſt have a Chriſt, they muſt be reconciled to God, they muſt deny themſelves, they muſt ſeek firſt the Kingdom of Heaven; No, theſe are indifferent things amongſt them, theſe are things minded by the by, if not matter of ſcorn and jeſting, theſe the world thinks unneceſſary things. It's neceſſary their fleſh ſhould be pleaſed, it's neceſſary the Devil ſhould be obeyed, it's neceſſary they and theirs ſhould be ſomebody in the world, theſe are matters of weight, for theſe they think it worth the while to toil and moil, to ride early and late, and to loſe their ſleep, and think they can never do too much; and all this while they ſee no need at all of getting a friend for their ſouls, no need at all of knowing, loving and delighting in God. Well, ſeeing the caſe is thus, ſeeing it is no great matter whether you know God, or be known of him; be not then troubled at the day of Judgement, if God look upon you as a ſtranger then, be not grieved (ſeeing the knowledge of God is nothing with you) if God ſay he knows you not; if Gods preſence be no ſuch material thing, complain not then for the want of it; be content, if you can, to hear him ſay, *Depart, I know you not.* O, but ſhall I thus leave you, poor ignorant ſinners? Conſider for the Lords ſake, for thy ſouls ſake, whether it be a neceſſary thing to avoid everlaſting burnings; is it a neceſſary thing to be ſaved? Is Eternal Glory and Heaven neceſſary? dare you ſay theſe are unneceſſary things? If theſe be neceſſary, then I am ſure

God and Christ are necessary; *For this is Life Eternal to know God, and him whom he hath sent, Jesus Christ.* O how will the case be altered ere long with the God-hating and Christ-despising world? when they shall be quite despoiled of all that which they prized above the knowledge of God, when all their friends shall appear to be enemies, when all their hopes shall be swept down like a Spiders web. O will they not then be of this mind, that it was no such slight matter that I was so earnest with them about, that acquaintance with God was no such unnecessary thing as they took it to be, and that there was more need of getting an interest in Christ, then of running to a Play-house, or a Whore-house. How will they rend the skies with their fruitless wishes? How will the mountains ecchо with their doleful lamentations? O that God would but know them, O that they might not hear that word, Depart! but seeing all that too little purpose, how then will they exclaim against themselves? O that they should be such fools, that they should be so madly besotted, as to neglect the looking after acquaintance with God. Time was, that God would have had them to come to him, he called after them, and sent for them again and again, but they would none of his company, they desired not the knowledge of the most High; they said to him, Depart from us: and now they have what they then desired; now they see that the Ministers had cause enough to say what they did, and a thousand times more. As troublesome as it was to hear of Hell, it's worse to feel it. They see now *Must* is for the Soul, and not the Body. O

that men and women would be now as ſerious in their judgements about theſe things as they will be ſhortly? Conſider, O man, that as little as thou mindeſt theſe things, theſe are the only things that are neceſſary. Thou *muſt* have a God for thy Friend, a Chriſt for thy Saviour to ſave thee from thy ſins, or elſe thou *Muſt* be damned, or elſe thou *Muſt* be curſed for ever. Thou mayſt lie racked upon thy bed of ſickneſs, where none can help thee; thou mayſt rot in a ſtinking dungeon, where no man can relieve thee; thou mayſt be roaſted in the flames, and yet for all this be a happy man. Worldly eaſe, pleaſure, health, riches, are none of thoſe abſolutely neceſſary things. A man may go to Hel and have them all, and a man may go to Heaven and want them. Thou mayſt have Eternal Reſt in another Life, though thou haſt ſcarce a day of eaſe in this. One may be a Favourite of God, though as miſerable as *Job*. But what will you ſay of that man that hath not a God to go to? This, this is the miſerable man with a witneſs? O that ſeeing mens lives are ſo ſhort, they would wiſely husband their precious time in minding nothing but neceſſary things! O that unneceſſaries might be cut off. When I am about to undertake a buſineſſe, let me ask my ſoul this queſtion: O my ſoul, is this a buſineſs of abſolute neceſſity? haſt thou not ſomething of greater importance that is yet undone? We enter not into the liſts for honour, where it is no great matter, whether we conquer, or no; we perſwade not men to buſie themſelves about toys, we are not ſo importunate about a thing of nothing. No Sirs, as unneceſſary as you think theſe things we ſpeak of

are, ere long you will say as much as we do, and more too; you'l shortly find, that it was as much as your life and happiness was worth that lay at stake. These are things we must mind you of, or else we hazard our souls; and they are things that you must mind also, or else you hazard yours. I want significant words enough, to express the weight and importance of these things. O that what is wanting of that nature, might be supplied with tears, groans and compassions. I am through mercy ashamed of my own heart, (O that I were more so) that I should speak of such serious matters so slightly. It is not now a time to jest, O my soul, when thou art to discourse with miserable men and women, which refuse their happiness, and doat upon their misery. Thou art now about a work that concerns souls, and their eternal state. Tell me dear friends, do you in sober sadness believe that you have immortal souls? do you indeed know that your souls are naturally enemies to God, and that if you be not reconciled to God, that you must be dealt with as enemies? do you really believe all this? do you believe what a dreadfull thing it is to look such an enemy in the face when he shall sit in Judgment? Further, do you believe what it is to lie down in devouring flames, and to dwell with everlasting burnings? do you not think it a fearful thing to fall into the hands of a living God? and if you do not, let me tell you, you are worse than mad; if you do believe all this, why, then let me ask you again, whether you conceive it unnecessary to use the utmost care and diligence to get acquainted with him: who can deliver you from

the wrath to come? O friends, I call you ſo, and I believe moſt of you love me dearly! O that you would do me one kindneſs; I ſhould count it the greateſt kindneſs that you can do me! why, what is that you ſay! why, it is but to pitty your own Souls, and to mind that one thing neceſſary, and to pitty them that are mourning for your dry eyes, and hard hearts? What ſay you to all this? if you have any thing to ſay againſt the neceſſity of theſe things, I am ready to plead the caſe with you, &c. Well, if it be not neceſſary to know God and Chriſt, and lay in proviſion for eternity, what then is neceſſary? If it be not neceſſary to ſerve, love, and delight in him who can deliver from everlaſting death, and reward with everlaſting life, what then is? Once more, for your Souls ſakes conſider what you do, when you vigorouſly purſue worldly things, and look upon the favour, and diſpleaſure of God, as ſmall things! O write not theſe things down amongſt the ſuperfluous things which are to be minded by the by. Remember this, that it is very poſſible for a man to be exceeding holy, and yet to be altogether unknown to the world, but it is altogether impoſſible to be truly happy, and yet unacquainted with God.

17. He is a tryed Friend. Thouſands and Millions can from their own experience, ſay all this, which I have ſaid of him, and much more; but I ſhall paſs this over at preſent, having hinted it already, and becauſe it may be I may touch upon ſomething of the ſame Nature hereafter.

18. He is an everlaſting Friend. I ſhall be but brief in ſpeaking to this head, becauſe what might have been ſpoken of this, fell under that

of his immortality. Yet becauſe it is poſſible to conceive God immortal in himſelf, and yet by reaſon of mans default, his kindneſs to him to be finite; ſo it was in reſpect of the Angels that fell from him. But now bleſſed be free Grace, man ſtands upon ſurer ground then ever he did, the children of God have a firmer bottom by far then then *Adam* had when he was in Paradice; his ſtate is more ſecure, being once united to God in Chriſt, then that of the Angels of heaven in their firſt Creation. For that their State was mutable, is *de facto* proved; but now bleſſed be rich goodneſs, if we can but make ſure of reconciliation with God, again it is impoſſible for us to miſcarry. God hath ſworn, and he will perform it, that the heirs of glory might have the more ſtrong conſolation, *Iſa.* 54. 9, 10. *For this is as the waters of* Noah: *for I have ſworn that the waters of* Noah *ſhould no more go over the earth, ſo have I ſworn that I would not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee. For the mountains ſhall depart, and the Hills be removed, but my kindneſs ſhall not depart from thee, neither ſhall the Covenant of my peace be removed, ſaith the Lord, that hath mercy on thee.* Gods children need not fear diſinheriting; his gifts, and callings are without repentance. If God loved us while we were enemies, how much more being reconciled will he continue his love to us: once a child of God, and a child of God for ever: once in favour, and never out of it again, *Rom.* 8. 35, 39. *Who ſhall ſeparate us from the love of Chriſt? ſhall tribulation, or diſtreſs, or perſecution, or famine, or nakedneſs, or peril, or ſword. Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature ſhall be able to ſeparate us from the love of God, which is in Chriſt Jeſus our Lord.* Who can

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pluck us out of the Arms of the Almighty? Who, or what is that which can alienate our Fathers affections from us? If the promiſe of God, which ſaith, I will never, never, never, never, never leave nor forſake you, be valid, if his oath bind him, if the blood of Chriſt continue always to be ſatisfactory, if his mediation can prevail, if the nature of God be unchangeable, we are wel enough, we are ſafe, if this be but clear that we are really reconciled to God, if we be acquainted with him. We are kept by the mighty power of God through Faith unto Salvation. If they had been of us, ſaith the Apoſtle, no doubt they would have continued with us. It is poſſible indeed, yea, common for men to pretend love to God, and to ſeem to have a true friendſhip for him, and yet not to be truly ſo. To have a name to live, and to live, are two things. It is no unuſual to bare God company (as I may ſay) abroad, and yet at home to have ſomebody that they have a greater kindneſs for. It is common to go along with God (if I may ſo call it) in the external actions of Religion, and yet to deſert him at laſt, *Iſa.* 58. 1, 2, 3. *Mat.* 7. 21. There are many that ſeem to bid fair for heaven, and if cap and knee will do, God ſhall have that; they will give him the huſk and ſhell, that they may keep the kernell for one that they love better. Thouſands there are of ſuch perſons in the world; and theſe profeſs abundance of kindneſs for God, they come oft to his houſe, and ſit down there, and make as if they were his friends, and his acquaintance, and ſome of Gods ſervants, by a miſtake, may bid them welcome, but yet for all this they may be ſtrangers; only they have

heard of God, and can talk of him, and it may be have given him many transient visits, but yet they want the reall properties of friends: they never knew what it was to be brought nigh to the Father, by the Son; to have a sence of their lost state and estrangement from God, and under a sence of this, to make earnest inquiry after him; they never knew what it was to converse with God, to have an intimate acquaintance with him; to be sending out the breathings of their Souls after him, and to be unsatisfied without him; they took up a trade of lifeless duties, and that was all. As for the life and power of Religion, they never understood it; communion with God, they heard oft of, but never understood what it meant, they never savoured, and rellished the things of God, nor with any suitableness or complacency ingaged in his service: And as for those more secret actings of Religion, to take up the interest of God, to design his glory, to be deeply concerned for his honour, observing their affections, and the workings of their hearts in duty; to take notice of answers, of prayers, or to look after their petitions, when they are out of their mouths, they know not what these things are. So that from hence it appears, that God, and they, were never really acquainted; no wonder then that they do forsake God, and are forsaken of him. The building might look neatly, and the house seem to be strong; but because it was built upon the sands, it need not seem strange, if it fall when the winds rise, and the waves beat against it: but I say it, and say it again, the house that is built upon a rock will not, cannot fall: If a man be really united to God in Christ, and

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the work of Grace throughly wrought upon him, it is impossible that God should forsake such a one. God can't but be true though man be false, he can't but value the satisfaction and intercession of his Son, he can't forget his own nature. *Isa.* 44. 15, 16. *Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the Son of her womb? Yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee. Behold I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands: thy walls are continually before me, &c.* I do not say but that God may suspend the refreshing intimations of his love; nay, he may quite hide his face, and his dearest ones may look upon themselves as free among the dead, they may reckon themselves such as have no acquaintance with God, and yet for all this be exceeding dear to God; this is clear'd by every days experience. Nay, I may say, I believe that there are very few of them which know what Gods presence, smiles and love is, but know in some measure what it is to have his face hid, to walk in the dark, and to see no light. It is no unusual thing of a child of God to question his state, to fear whether all that he ever did were not in hypocrisie and formality; have not the best been made sometimes to question (especially upon some notable fall) whether, what they did formerly, did not proceed from meer common grace, or some less spiritual principle then the life of grace, and a divine nature within them. Were there ever any of the Sons of *Adam*, whom rich mercy hath plucked as Fire-brands out of the fire, to whom the Lord hath shewed his marvellous kindness, and love in Christ, that hath kept their watch so exactly, that have walked so closely with God, so as ne-

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yet to have the least frown from him? were there ever any that lived all their days under a constant lively sence of their intereſt in divine everlasting love? If there be, they have fared better then *Job* did, they enjoyed more then ever *Heman* or *David* did. A child of God may oft be in a sad state, but yet he is always in a safe state: the purpose of God stands firm. Though for a small moment he seem to forsake them, yet with everlasting mercies will he gather them? O Everlasting! That's a sweet word indeed in the Saints ear; he would not that one word should have been out of the Bible, left out of the promise, for a world, *Isa.* 54. If thou beest once truly acquainted with God, thy state is as safe, thy condition as sure as if thou wer't already in heaven. God may and will chastise his with rods, but his loving kindness he will never remove from them, his mercy indures for ever. All that God gives to his friends and acquaintance, that is spiritual, is like himself, Everlasting. God is not like short-spirited man, every moment changing, one day doating upon an object, and the next day hating it as much. An earthly Prince may one moment set his Favourite at his Table, and the next command that he should be hanged. But far be it from the unchangable God, that he should do thus. As for the great ones of the world, it hath been counted by some, and those none of the weakest, no small piece of policy, to keep out of their knowledge: their favours are so dearly bought, their kindness so uncertain, their displeasure so dangerous, and yet so easily procured. But here it is far otherwise. It is God, and God alone that is an everlasting Friend, in whose presence

ſence there is fulneſs of Joy, and Pleaſure for ever more. O theſe everlaſting things are great things! An everlaſting friend, an everlaſting inheritance, everlaſting glory, everlaſting joy, everlaſting life, and everlaſting death, they are matters of weight! O why ſhould not our very ſouls be overpowered with the very thoughts of ſuch things! O this unbelief, this unbelief!

19. He is one that is willing and deſirous to be acquainted with you. What I have ſaid before had ſignified little to us, were it not for this. It's a miſery, and no comfort, to hear and know the great things which we muſt go without. But this is that which puts life into all thoſe powerful *Motives* which I handled before. God is the moſt loving, moſt ſtrong and rich Friend, and withall he hath in him a ſweet inclination to be acquainted with us. The tearms that he offers are the moſt reaſonable in the world. This, this is the comfort of the poor fallen ſons and daughters of *Adam*; that though they have run away from God, though they have left their fathers houſe, and turn'd prodigals; yet their tender-hearted compaſſionate father is ready to receive them again, his arms are open, he meets them; while they are yet a great way off, he runs to them and falls upon their neck and kiſſes them, and expreſſeth the greateſt kindneſs to them and joy for their return. O unparalell'd love! O infinite goodneſs! God hath expreſſed this his willingneſs to receive poor loſt ſinners abundantly throughout all the Scripture. If God had not been willing to have been friends again with man, what needed he to have given himſelf the

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trouble of parting with his deareſt Son, and ſending him into the world to manage this great work of reconciling man to himſelf? why elſe was that precious bloud ſhed? and to what purpoſe ſhould he ſend ſo many Prophets, Apoſtles, and Miniſters, for ſo many hundreds of years, riſing up early, and ſitting up late? why are they commanded to cry aloud, to uſe ſo much earneſtneſs, to compel poor wandring ſtrangers to come to his houſe, but that he might be acquainted with them? Can any one conceive that he ſhould do all this without the leaſt deſign of kindneſs? If all that God hath done to the reconciling man to himſelf, doth not ſpeak his willingneſs to be reconciled to them, what can? *Iſa.* 5. 4. Nay, ſo willing is he to receive them, notwithſtanding all their backſlidings, that he teacheth them how they may addreſs themſelves to him moſt acceptably, he puts words into their mouths which they may uſe with good ſucceſs when they come before him, *Hoſ.* 14. 1, 2, 4. Nay, that ſinners may be the more confirmed in their expectation of his favour, he hath moſt ſolemnly ſworn, *That he delights not in the death of ſinners, but had rather that they ſhould return and live.* Wherefore elſe is it that we are ſo ſtraightly commanded, as we will anſwer the neglect upon our peril before God at that terrible day, that we preach the Word in ſeaſon and out of ſeaſon? To what purpoſe ſhould *Paul* expoſe himſelf to ſo many hazards both by ſea and land? VVhy ſhould he teach this Doctrine of Reconciliation night and day with tears? Doth he not tell you that he did all this by Divine Diſpenſation, and that it was as much as his ſoul was worth to

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wave this work? And doth not all this speak his willingneſs to be friends again with man? Could not God have ſent Legions of Angels with flaming ſwords in their hands, when he ſent his Son and thouſands of Prophets, Apoſtles, Miniſters and Teachers? might he not have proclaimed war againſt them for ever, when he followed them with the Embaſſadors of peace? If he had had no thoughts of Agreement with them, could he not have ſpoken to them in thunder and lightning, with fire and brimſtone, as well as in the ſtill voice of the Goſpel? He could if he had pleaſed have made them to have known the breach of his Covenant, by giving them up to the will of their cruel enemies. God could as eaſily have cut off a whole world of us, as we can cruſh a moth, and eaſier too. But he is willing to ſhew forth the riches of his patience and goodneſs, that thereby ſinners might be brought to repentance. How doth God further expreſs his willingneſs to receive returning ſinners, by engaging them by many temporal favours? Who preſerved that tender creature in the womb, and brought it out of thoſe dark Chambers into light? Who kept that helpleſs infant after it was in the world? Whoſe flax and wool do we wear upon our backs? To whom is it that we are beholding for every crumb we eat, and every drop we drink? Who ſpreads our table for us, and makes our cups to overflow? Who brought us from the brink of the grave, when we had received the ſentence from our Doctor and our Diſeaſe? And what is the Language of all theſe mercies, *but return, O backſliding ſinner, for in me is thy help found.* Love, delight

light in, and be acquainted with him, from whom thou haſt received ſo many kindneſſes. If thou wouldeſt accept of him for thy Lord, Husband, and Friend, who hath ſent thee theſe tokens, thou ſhalt have other favours then theſe be. Is not this the meaning of all the common mercies that we daily receive from him? VVhy, was not thy breath ſtopt with an Oath in thy mouth? VVhy is it that ſo many thouſands that were born ſince thy ſelf, are gone to their eternal ſtate, when thou art ſtill ſtanding? VVhat haſt thou done to engage God more then others, that worms ſhould not be feeding on on thee, when thou art feeding upon the fat and ſweet? VVhat is the *Engliſh* of all this? what are all theſe droves of mercies which God ſends to thee, but to cool thy enmity againſt him, and to make thee, who art marching out in thy warlike furniture, to meet him with tears of joy and friendly embraces? Is not, *Love the Giver*, written upon all his tokens? VVhat means his frequent viſiting of thee, but deſire of acquaintance with thee? Had he had no deſire at all to know you, and to be known of you, do you think he would have call'd ſo oft and ſo kindly at your door, would he have ſtood knocking with ſo much patience, and have ſpoke to you ſo lovingly if he deſired ſtill to be a ſtranger to you? Is this like one that deſires your ruine? Did God never plead with thee by his Miniſters, and urge the ſame Argument that I do now? Did you never hear ſuch kind of expoſtulations as theſe? VVhy wilt thou go on to deſpiſe thy God, and to refuſe his love? what reaſon haſt thou to harbour ſuch hard thoughts of him? doth he deſerve ſuch un-

unkindneſs at your hands? How long ye ſimple ones will ye love ſimplicity? why will ye make light of that you can't poſſibly overvalue? the favour of God, and acquaintance with thy maker. How oft have you grieved his Spirit by your unworthy contempts? how many times have you given him cauſe to complain of your unhandſome uſage, when he in very pity and compaſſion came to viſit you: He hath reaſon to ſay now, as well as of old, *Hear O heavens, and give ear O earth, for I have nouriſhed and brought up children, and they have rebelled againſt me, Iſa.1.2. Do ye ye thus requite the Lord, O fooliſh people, and unwiſe? is not he thy father that bought thee? hath he not made thee and eſtabliſhed thee?* Deut.32.6. *O that they were wiſe. And be inſtructed O Jeruſalem, leaſt my ſoul depart from thee,* Jer. 6.8. Is not this the voice of mercy? have not theſe been Expoſtulations of the mighty God with his rebellious Creatures? and yet how do they ſtand it out all this while, as if God were like to get ſo much by their acquaintance? Return, O fooliſh ſinner, if thou makeſt any thing of Salvation and Damnation, if thou valueſt everlaſting glory, if thou thinkeſt the commands, threatnings, and promiſes of the Almighty to be minded, come away and make no delay. O why wilt thou go on thus madly to undo thy ſelf? come away poor ſoul, for all this it is not yet quite too late, thy glaſs is not yet quite run, thy ſoul is not yet fully fixed in its unchangeable ſtate. Once more I make ſuch an offer to thee, as I am ſure none but a mad man will refuſe; ſuch an offer as none of the Kings and Lords of the world can make. The great and mighty Monarch of Heaven tenders thee an Alliance

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with himself; he sees how far thou art spent, how poor and low thou hast brought thy self by a dangerous and long war against thy maker; he foresees what a condition thou wilt be in after a few more merry hours, except thou repent and turn. Wherefore in compassion to thy precious soul he hath commanded us to follow thee, and not to let thee be at quiet till thou hast given us a promise, that thou wilt return and humble thy self to thy God; and what shall we still lose our labour! shall all this come to nothing! O prodigy of unkindness! O wonder of patience! thou hast slighted the friendship of thy God, thou hast set light by Christ, and undervalued Heaven and Eternity for ten, twenty, thirty years already, and yet the Lord send us once more in his name to ask you whether you are willing to have God for your Friend; God hath not yet said, *Cut him down, bind him hand and foot, and cast him into that lake that burns for ever. Bring those mine enemies that would not that I should reign over them, and slay them before my face.* God hath not yet spake that dreadful word, *Depart.* O what is it thou stayest for? What is it that makes this business to hang so long? What Lover is it that doth so long hold back thy heart? What is the matter that we can no more speedily and effectually manage this great affair? What is it that thou dost prefer before God? What is it that thou thinkest more worthy of thy warmest love then Christ? What is that great thing that thou stickest not to venture thy soul for? Act like a man that is rational and not beside himself. If the World be God, if Earth be better then Christ, then choose that; if Christ be God, then choose him. How long

will

will you ſtand halting between two? love that which will laſt longeſt, be acquainted with him that is willing and able to do moſt for thee. Is the world worth more now then it was in *Davids* time, when he preferred the favour of God before thouſands of Gold and Silver? Is the price of it raiſed? Can it bribe death, and ſtop the mouth of Divine Juſtice, and procure thee a real reſpect in another world? Go chaffer and ſee what bargain thou canſt make; tell God that thou wilt give him thouſands for thy brothers life, and as much more for the lengthning the leaſe of thy own to Eternity. What doth God ſay? is the bargain made? is it not enough? why, add a world to it, will that do? If it will not do this, if this purchaſe be too great for thy purſe, then go lower; can all thou haſt keep thee from fears, get thee a ſtomach, procure thee eaſe, rectifie thy conſtitution; will it do this, or will it not? if not, why ſhouldſt thou value that which can do ſo little for thee, before that which can do all things for thee? Be perſwaded at laſt to be wiſe. What is God like to get by your love, or loſe by your hatred? What have you to boaſt of? What excellencies to ſet you out? what portion to advance you, that you ſtand thus upon your tearms? Come, let's hear a little what it is thou thinkeſt ſo highly of thy ſelf for. I am ſure your over-great beauty can't commend you: for a Black moor may with better reaſon brag of comlineſs, then ſuch a deformed loathſome creature can of beauty. I am ſure your helpfulneſs will not ſpeak for you; for thou art a crazy, decrepid, ſickly creature, that will coſt God more to cure thee, then thou art worth a thouſand

times. It can't be for thy Estate that thou art so much desired, for all thy Gold is adulterate, thy Jewels counterfeit, thy All forfeited; and what is it then that thou hast yet to boast of? come and set it before us, that we may acknowledge our mistakes. Are the cloaths upon thy back (as fine as thou art) thy own? is the food that thou eatest paid for? and is this the Creature that must be wooed with so much earnestness? Behold all ye inhabitants of the world, and admire! hear, O Heavens! this is that——(I want a name to call her by) which thinks it below her to be match'd to Christ, and an undervaluing to be acquainted with her maker, and a shame to have God for her Father! from the crown of the head to the sole of the foot there is nothing but wounds and bruises and putrified soars; running plague soars that are broken are her greatest beauty: and here's a thing to be lov'd with all my heart! *Ezek.* 16. Whosoever thou art that readest these lines, this was once thy condition, in these ornaments he found thee, when God came to ask thy heart, this was thy dress, though thou art thus highly advanced. And such were some of you, but ye are washed, but ye are cleansed.

And after all this, O sinner, art thou still as stout and proud as ever? Is Christ so willing to bring thee to his Father? is he willing to cloath thee from head to foot with glorious robes, such a dress as may become thee in the presence of a King? doth he offer to lead thee in his hands to his own palace? is God so willing and desirous to be your Father, and Christ to be your Husband? are all the Ministers of Christ so willing to do their utmost to bring this match to perfection?

shall

shall they lie at you day and night to give your consent, and to be willing: and are you still unwilling? Well, if all this signifie little, and you miss of Christ at last, and be not acquainted with God after all, remember it was your own doings: and that you thought it greater wisdom to marry the servant then the Master, to obey the Rebel rather then your loving Prince. Remember you preferred Darkness before Light, Hell before Heaven. I call Heaven and Earth to record this day, that I have set Life and Death before you, and you stand as if it were so difficult a matter to resolve which were the best. This sounds strangely, and every one will be ready to write *Fool* upon that mans forehead that acts thus. Hold man, be not too ready to pass thy censure before thou look within thee. Dost thou see an absolute need of Christ? Dost thou adore his infinite love and kindness? Dost thou give up thy self to him for thy Lord, and receive him for better for worse, come on it what will? Or dost thou not rather spend thy thoughts, and let out thy affections upon the vanities and pleasures of the world? Dost thou not love Father and mother, Wife and Children, Brethren and Sisters, House and Lands more then him? Why, if this be thy case, I must say thou art one of the fools that loves Death and hatest Life, thou callest that folly in another, which in thy self thou countest wisdom. I wonder who it is that you strive to please all this while! Is not the hand of *Joab* in all this? hath not Satan been deep in retarding this match? hath not he a design to marry thee to some painted Lust, though he undoe thee for ever? and must he be pleased rather then

Is it more necessary to gratifie him that ne[ver] yet intended to do any of the sons of *Adam* an[y] kindness, rather then thy best friends? Com[e] away for shame, and let us lose our breath n[o] longer; and let that time we spend in pleadi[ng] with you for God, be spent in singing with yo[u] and praising God for you, and congratulatin[g] your happy acquaintance with God, and you[r] matching to his only Son.

19. But because man is so wedded to th[e] world, and doates upon his lust that all the argu[-] ments that we can use are most commonly un[-] successful; I shall add one more upon this sor[t] of motives drawn from the qualifications of hi[m] whom I would fain have you acquainted with and that shall take in all that can be said on th[is] head, and that is this, consider that he is altoge[-] ther lovely, he is made up of love, goodness, and all excellencies; and whatsoever pleasure, delight and content you find in the Creature, it is tran[-] scendently in him, he is the chiefest of ten thou[-] sands: ask of them that by Faith have seen him, inquire of the Spouse in the *Canticles*, and ask her what is her beloved, more then another beloved? what there is in God and Christ more then in the world, and she will almost wonder, that any one that is rational should ask so foolish a question; she thinks you might with as much judgment and reason have ask'd, what there is in heaven, more desireable then in hell? What is there is in ease more then in torments? in Gold and Jewels, more then in dross, in a living, healthful, beautiful Creature, more then in a stinking rotten carcase? Did you but see his face, you would soon think that were something in

him

him more then in another. Could you but see his eye, your heart would burn in a flame; did you but understand what it is to be brought into his banquetting house, you would say that they are neither fools, nor mad-men, that can find in their hearts to scorn the baubles and glories of this world, in comparison of one look or smile from God; and believe that his love was better then wine, to be preferred infinitely before the greatest worldly pleasures, and think that the virgins had reason enough to love him, *Cant.* 1. 4. How high doth the Church run in his commendations? How doth she endeavour to let him out to the life, that every one may admire his excellencies, and be taken with his beauties as well as her self; neither doth she fear to loose him by this, nor indeed is unwilling that others should fall in love with him as well as she, *Cant.* 5. 9. 10. &c. She begins first with his face, his white & ruddy the most exact beauty, so that she must be blind that is not taken with him, and so she goes on as well as she can to set him out; but he is so infinitely above her commendations, that she wants words to express her self, therefore she speaks one great one, *He is altogether lovely*; and if you will not believe, come and see. Do but look upon him by Faith and meditation, contemplate his beauties, and then if you have any thing yet to object, if after you have had a true sight of him, and have well weighed all, you do not find that there is in him, infinitely more then I can tell you, why then let me bear the blame for ever.

Well, now let us gather up all these things together; and if a multitude of arguments, and of weight and reason, if vehemency and earnestness

may prevail; I should have some good hopes that I should not want success in this work, nor you of the acquaintance with God, and everlasting glory. Therefore I say again, if kindness and love be taking, who so sweet and obliging as he? If comfort, joy and pleasure be desirable, who is there, when the Soul is surrounded with a multitude of perplexities that can so much delight, refresh and raise it? If Power, Glory and Majesty, if ability to defend from injuries, and revenge wrongs, might signifie any thing with poor shiftless Creatures, who is there that ever yet prevailed against him? Who ever contended with God and prospered? If vigour, activity, and care in all the affairs of his friends, can intice the dull helpless sinner to receive him; who will take more care for, and do more for them then he? If his humility may engage us, if freedom of access, notwithstanding that infinite distance that is between us and him, signifie any thing as to the commending of him to our acquaintance; where can a poor beggar be more welcome then at the house of this mighty Prince? Can Faithfulness in the greatest streight raise the esteem of a friend? who ever yet trusted him that was deceived? Are riches and wealth taking? Who is there that can give a kingdom for a portion, a love-token, and give everlasting glory, and heaven for a joynture, but God? Doth pitty in misery, sympathy in suffering, compassion in distress, indear and commend a friend, who is more tender-hearted then he? Are Honours and Preferments such great things? Who is that which will make all his favourites Kings and Priests, and set them upon Thrones, and reward, and commend

them

them before the whole World? is suitableness a considerable qualification to make up this match? who so suitable for the Soul, a Spirit, as God a Spirit? Who can satisfie it's vast and infinite desires, but infinity it self? Have poor simple Creatures that have quite undon themselves by their folly and indiscretion need of a wise Counsellor to wind them out of their sad intricacies? who is there among the profound Politicians and grave Sages of the world to be compared unto him? Doth a dying man that hath a never-dying Soul, that is to pass speedily into an eternal state, lack a never-dying & immortal friend, that may stand him in some stead, when all his Relations are dead and rotten? is not God immortal? Are not friends sometimes furthest off from one, when one hath most need of them? Is not he then a friend highly to be prized, who can, who will never be absent? Doth not God fill heaven and earth? What think you of a Soul-friend? is not such a one worth the looking after, who takes care that your Soul to be sure shall not miscarry? Who ever did more for Souls then Christ? Will it not be true prudence to make sure of such a friend as we must have for our friend, or we are miserable for ever? and where is such a one to be found, but he that hath the keys of heaven and hell? Which is most considerable, Time, or Eternity? and whom shall I most value, him that promiseth present pleasures that are lost as soon as felt, or him that will bestow everlasting favours? and are there not at Gods right hand pleasures for evermore? If the trial and experience of so many millions may speak his commendation, will not all that ever knew

God say, truly God is good to *Israel*. Will Gods willingness, desire, and earnestness prevail with you to come to him? What is the substance of the whole Bible? doth not almost every Chapter speak the desire that God hath to be reconciled to man? if the perfection of all excellencies meeting in one can render him amiable, how can he be slighted, who is altogether lovely? And what say you now, are you resolved, or are you not? Shall the infinite Majesty of Heaven condescend to offer himself to be loved and imbraced by sinful dust? shall God say, I will be thy Father? and shall not the sinner say, I would be thy Child? Why should not the heart of every Apostate rebellious Traytor, that hath forfeited Estate, Life and Soul, leap at such good news, and say, will God for all this lay aside the controversie, and conclude a peace? Will he receive the rebell to mercy? will he open his doors to his prodigal? and is there yet any hope? Is it possible that such sins as mine should be forgiven? Can it be conceived that such a Creature as I should be imbraced? what look upon me, will God indeed take me into favour? Yes, thee, behold he calls thee, he offers thee his Son, a Kingdom, a Crown, behold, the Father meets, he makes haste to meet his returning prodigal; behold the King hath sent to invite thee to the feast: nay, he will give thee his only Son in marriage, the wedding garment is made ready, the Bridegroom is coming, the wheels of his Chariot run apace, the friends of the Bridegroom are come to bid you make ready: up, deck your self, put on your glorious Apparel, make haste, make haste ye Virgins, your companions are ready, all stay for you,

yay, the Bridegroom is as the dore. Behold he is at the dore, and will you not let him knock? What, Father, Husband, a Kingdom? What words are these? Wilt thou O mighty Jehovah be my Father? Wilt thou O blessed Jesus be my Husband? shall I have a kingdom? What, me a Child, a Spouse for the King of glory, an Heir of glory? Grace! Grace! Amen. Hallelujah. Be it to thy servants according to thy word: but who are we, and what is our father's house, that thou hast brought us hitherto? and now O Lord God! what shall thy servants say unto thee? for we are astonished with wonder, and must sit down with astonishment, for we cannot utter the least title of thy Praises. What meaneth the sighth of this strange love? O that the God of heaven and earth should condescend to enter into Covenant with his dust, and to take into his bosom the viperous broods that have offered their venome in his face! We are not worthy to be as the handmaids, to wash the feet of the servants of our Lords slow, much less to be thy Sons and Heirs, and to be made partakers of all those blessed Liberties and Privileges which thou hast settled upon us; but for thy goodness sake, and according to thy own heart, hast thou done all these great things. Forasmuch Father, *because sin is entered, God in thy sight. Wherefore thou art great, O God, for there is none like thee, neither is there any God besides thee, according to all that we have heard with our ears. And what nation on earth is like thy people, whom God went to redeem for a people to himself, and to make him a name, and to do for them great things and terrible, for thou hast confirmed them to thy self to be a people unto thee for ever, and thou Lord, art become their God. Wonder,*

O Heavens, and be moved O Earth, at this great thing! For, behold, the Tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. Be astonished and ravished with wonder, for the infinite breach is made up, the offender is received, and God and man are reconciled, and a Covenant of peace entred, and Heaven and Earth are agreed upon the termes, and have struck their hands, and sealed the Indentures. O happy conclusion! O blessed conjunction! Shall the Stars dwell with the dust? or the wide distant Poles be brought to mutual embraces and cohabitation? But here the distance of the termes is infinitely greater, *Rejoyce O Angels! shout O Seraphims!* O all the friends of the Bridegroom and Bride, prepare an *Epithalamium*, be ready with the marriage Song. Lo here is the wonder of wonders! for *Jehovah* hath betrothed himself for ever to his hopeless captives, and owns the marriage before all the world, and is become one with us, and we with him; he hath bequeathed to us the precious things of the earth beneath, with the fulness thereof, and hath kept back nothing from us. And now, O Lord, thou art that God, and thy words be true, and thou hast promised this goodness unto thy servants, and hast left us nothing to ask at thy hands, but what thou hast already freely granted. Only the word which thou hast spoken concerning thy servants, establish it for ever, and do as thou hast said, and let thy name be magnified for ever, saying, *The Lord of Hosts he is the God of Israel. Amen. Hallelujah.* And how do you like this musick, O ye the last Sons and Daughters of *Adam*? how do you relish

these

these Dainties? what do you think of this match? Some you see have been so wise, as with the greatest gratitude they can for their souls, to close with those happy offers of grace. You hear how bravely such and such have bestowed themselves, and now they are made for ever. And what do you say to the same propotals? have they so much reason to bless the day that ever such a motion was made? have they cause to rejoyce for ever for those blessed overtures, or are they all to be slighted by you? will Christ be worse to you then them? is Heaven and Happiness less necessary for you then them? will the loss of a Soul be more inconsiderable to you, then it would have been to them? Will not Heaven, Christ and Glory be as well worth your acceptance as theirs? What, are you willing to be shut out, when the Bridegroom comes to fetch his Spouse home? Can you bare it, to see such as you thought your inferiours, advanced, and your self despised? What shall I say? what words shall I use? what shall I do to prevail? O that I could pity you a thousand times more than I do! O that my eyes might weep in secret for thy folly! O that you also might do as some have done before you! though indeed they be but few that be so wise! O that you would also bestow your heart upon Christ! give him your heart-love, or he will have your heart-blood. Do not make your self miserable to please any living; do not slight Christ, because most do so; go not with them to Hell for company. But that, if it be possible, I might perswade you, I shall add some more motives, to prevail with you to get acquainted with God, which I am certain will either work that

blessed

blessed effect, or rise up against you to the aggravation of your confusion, in that great and terrible day.

II. HEAD OF MOTIVES.

The next Head of Motives which I shall insist upon, for the inforcing of this Duty of acquainting your selves with God, I shall take from the glorious effect of this acquaintance with God.

1. The first effect of this acquaintance with God is, it makes the soul humble, and consequently fits the soul for greater communications from God still, and to do God the greater service; but of that particular afterwards. Acquaintance with God it makes the Soul humble. When God comes into the Soul, he brings such a glorious light along with him, that he makes the Soul to see, not only his beauty, but its own deformity. *Psal.* 119. 130. *The entrance of thy word giveth light: it giveth understanding to the simple.* Before the Soul was acquainted with the word of God, and by that had some discoveries of God made to it out of the Word, why it was in the dark, and saw nothing at all of its own vileness, it took no notice of that Sink, that Hell that was within it, considered not its own Treason against the Lord of Heaven and Earth, and the dangerous hazzards that it did run every moment upon that account; but the Soul thought very well of its own state, it flattered it self in its own iniquity, the man thinks he is rich and increased in goods, and hath need of nothing; but when he comes to look into his Purse, to open his

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Treasury, and to tell over all his Gold, and Silver in the light, why then he perceives a sad mistake: all his Silver is drosse, and the best Riches that he hath is but dung. When the light comes in, he sees the darkness of his Understanding, the perverseness of his Will, the disorderliness of his Affections, the distemper of the whole soul. He before took himself for a beautiful creature, but by this light & this glass he sees his beauty is great deformity, he beholds heaps of lusts crawling up and down, which before lay undiscerned, and then that man that reckoned himself so happy, cries out, *O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me? what shall I do to be saved?* I am undon, undon, how shall I live, where shall I dwell for ever? Time was that the man admired what the Ministers ailed to steep such a stir about sin, but now he wonders that they are no more earnest in their preaching of it down. It was a little while ago, that he thought himself whole, but now he feels himself sick to the very heart, wounded, fainting and ready to dye; he made full account that he was pure, but now he cries out unclean, unclean; it was not long since he said with indignation, am I blind also? but now he cries out, and will not be silenced, have mercy upon me *Jesus*, thou Son of *David*, and grant that I may receive my sight. His language is much altered; he can now say, was ever such a sinner as I pardoned? Will such a prodigal ever be received? shall such foul offences as mine be forgiven? if God should look upon me, and give me a Christ, and pity me, and cast his skirts over me, while I lye in my blood; if the Lord should look upon me, it would be such a wonder

that

that all that ever heard of it may justly admire. Now the man which thought himself the best of Saints, believes himself as bad as the worst of sinners: When a man begins to be acquainted with God, he begins also to know himself; He that saw no need of washing by Christ, would now have hands, feet, head and heart all washt. He that thought himself sometimes far enough from Hell, now begins to admire that he did not fall into it: and although there be a sweet alteration in him for the better, and Saints begin to delight very much in him, yet he wonders that any one should see any thing in him, that should cause any affection in them towards him, much more inflame their hearts in such vehement love to him; if he hear of any reproaches that are cast upon him, he is ready to say with that wise stoick, (*Epict.*) *If he had known me better, he would have spoke much worse of me. If any praise him, he judgeth that it proceeds from their ignorance of his weakness, rather than from any knowledge of his worth; and if he hear any such language, he is ready to tremble for fear of his own heart, and cries out, not unto me, not unto me, but unto his name be the praise: yet not I, but Christ which dwelleth in me.* Thus it is with one that begins to have some saving knowledge of God; and the nearer he comes to God, the further he goes from himself; the more he sees of him and his righteousness, the less he sees of his own; the more he is exalted, the more he debaseth himself; like those four and twenty Elders, he lays his Crown at the feet of God. Thus it was with *Job*, when God, as I may so say, stood at a greater distance from him, he is ready to speak a little too highly, he stands much upon his own righteousness, he

finely

ſtify juſtifieth himſelf; but when the holy Ghoſt comes a little nearer to him, when he throws off that dark cloud with which he had mantled himſelf, and when he cauſed that glorious brightneſs to break forth upon *Job*, and made him to ſee a glance of his Holineſs, Wiſdom and Juſtice, then how is he even aſhamed and confounded within himſelf, that he ſhould ever ſtand ſo much upon his own juſtification, *Job* 42. 5, 6. *I have heard of thee, by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye ſeeth thee. Wherefore I abhor my ſelf, and repent in duſt and aſhes.* When he comes to be better acquainted with God, how ſtrangely is his note changed; and I might ſay, when he was thus abaſed! how ſpeedily doth God raiſe him to a wonder. A man may hear of God twenty years together, and yet never abhor himſelf with duſt and aſhes, never ſee any wileneſs that is in his nature, never be brought off from his own righteouſneſs, never admire that he is kept out of Hell! O but when he comes to ſee God, and to be acquainted with him, how doth he cry out of himſelf as unworthy to breath in the air, as deſerving nothing but wrath; then he hath not a word to ſay for the goodneſs of his own heart, now he can ſay with aſtoniſhment! O infinite patience! O unmeaſurable goodneſs! O the depths of Gods love! He muſt be merciful indeed that can pardon ſuch ſins! That muſt be goodneſs indeed that can be ſo to me! That is love with a witneſs, that can imbrace ſuch a loathſome monſter? What was it that made *Abraham* call himſelf duſt and aſhes? What made *David* to ſay he was a worm and no man? What made *Iſaiah* ſpeak ſo debaſingly of himſelf? why theſe were the

friends

friends of God, they had visions of that holy Dove. When is it that the people of God are most ingenuous in their confessions? when do they most freely pour out their souls before God? When is it that they most readily open their sores and desire that they should be searched, but when this great Chirurgion comes to their chamber? those which before were whole, are now sick, full of plague sores, head and heart sick, dangerously sick, and no whole part in them; they can say more against themselves now, then ever the Minister could; they can aggravate their sins, and lay loads upon themselves; and they see themselves vile, and even are ready to wonder that the earth did not open and swallow them up before this, they admire that God should indure them so long, and think it no small miracle that they were not crushed in the egge, that they were not cast from the darkness of the Womb, to the darkness of Hell. Now they can cry out of Original Sin, and the indisposition of their souls to any thing that is good, and inclination to that which is bad. They say as well as *David*, *That they were born in sin, and in iniquity did their mother conceive them*; they think every thing too good for them, all mercy on this side everlasting misery. They count every bit they eat, and every drop they drink more then they deserve. They think themselves unworthy of the least of Gods mercies, *Gen.* 32. 10. Others say thanksgivings, but he feels them; others say confessions, but he feels them. It is one thing for a man to speak of his own unworthiness and another thing to lie under the sense of it. The heart and tongue are two distinct members. The heart

may

may ſpeak that which the tongue can't utter, and the tongue may utter that which the heart never felt. But a man that is brought into acquaintance with God ſpeaks what he experiences, or rather his experience is greater then he ſpeaks, ſo that he doth not diſſemble with God, when he confeſſeth his ſin before him. They lay themſelves as low as Hell; this is humility, and this is an effect of acquaintance with God. Hence it is that *Paul* ſaith of himſelf, *Eph.* 3. 8. *Unto me who am leſs then the leaſt of all Saints is this grace given, that I ſhould preach among the Gentiles the unſearchable riches of Chriſt; and to make all men ſee what is the fellowſhip, &c.* He wants words to expreſs Gods greatneſs, and his own ſmalneſs. Now what was it that made *Paul* ſpeak and think thus of himſelf? There was a time when *Paul* would have ſpit in any ones face that ſhould have ſpoke as much againſt him, as he did againſt himſelf. VVhat is it that hath wrought ſuch a ſtrange alteration in this great *Rabbi*, and made him ſo little? VVhy, this acquaintance with God, the ſight of Chriſt was the thing that laid this proud Phariſee in the duſt, and made him blind alſo. Mark this, always the more heavenly any man is, the more humble. See *Exod.* 3. 11. 2 *Sam.* 7. 18. If I ſhould appeal to the experiences of Saints, and ask them, when they had the loweſt thoughts of themſelves, would they not ſay, when they were neareſt God? Now would you walk humbly, you muſt walk with your God; would you ſee more of your own deformity? why then you muſt labour to ſee more of his holineſs, more of his beauty. Contraries ſet neer one another, appear more viſibly.

2. Another excellent effect of Acquaintance with God, is, that it will make a man fall upon sin in good earnest. When the soul sees how infinitely good God is, it can't but see an unspeakable evil in sin, which is so directly contrary to him. When the soul hath really entred into a League with God, it presently bids defiance to all his enemies; when he begins to be at peace with God, he presently commenceth a war against his adversaries. Friendship with God makes enmity against Satan. That which formerly the man rolled under his tongue as a sweet morsel, is now like gall and wormwood to him. He that sometimes did commit iniquity with greediness, can now say, that it is the greatest folly and madness in the world; he knows that it is an evil and a bitter thing, as sweet as it tasted when his pallate was distempered; he that gloried in his wickedness, now accounts it the greatest shame in the world, and hates the garment which are bespotted with the flesh, which sometimes he took for beautiful raiments. The burnt child dreads the fire; sin hath cost his friend dear, and him dear too. The child can't love that knife which stabb'd his Father. He knows how sweet God is, and how much he hates sin, and that if he would have Gods company, he must bid an everlasting farewel to his dearest beloved sin; and therefore rather then he will offend so dear a friend, he will hew *Agag* in pieces before the Lord. He will as soon cut off one hand with the other, and be pull'd limb from limb, as again draw his sword against his covenanted friend, and again venture into the field in the cause that sometimes he did so deeply engage body and soul

in. He that thought before that it was no great matter to Damn, Curse and Tear, but a trick of youth to Whore, and no harm to do what one had a mind to, to Eat and Drink, and Talk, and Sleep as one lists, to give ones Lust whatsoever it call'd for; he that could once make a mock of sin, and Sleep securely upon the top of a mast, and thought it a piece of Gallantry to dare the Almighty, and was ready to laugh at them which durst not be so Prodigal of of their Souls, as himself: the case is now wonderfully altered with him, he now sees the Harlot strips naked, he beholds how loathsome the whore is now her paint is washed off, sin and hell are alike to him; tempt him to folly, and he will soon answer in *Josephs* language, *How shall I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?* He that sometimes thought sin the only pleasure, and looked upon the Devil and the world as the only Friends, now sees his dangerous mistake, and blesseth God that his eyes are opened before he comes into another world; he knows now that holiness is the only pleasure, and God is the only Friend, and sin, and the world are as mortal enemies as the Devil himself, he believes that if he venture upon sin, he must venture upon the displeasure of his Friend, whose favour he set more store by than all the delights under Heaven, and whose loving kindness he judgeth to be better then life it self. When the Soul is once acquainted with God, how strangely are its apprehensions of things altered? Now he calls Things and Persons by their right Name, good he calls good, and evil evil, whereas before he called evil good, and good

evil, and put light for darkneſs, and darkneſs for light; he now believes that the zealous compaſſionate Miniſters that ſpoke ſo much againſt ſin, had reaſon enough to have ſaid ten times as much as they did; he ſees that it was not for nothing that they were ſo earneſt with him; he hath taſted the Gall, Wormwood, and Poiſon that is in ſin; he plainly ſees what is the great Makebate between God and Man, he hath now the wit to underſtand what it is that hath kept good things ſo long from him. Tell him now of a Revel, a Whore, he had as live thou ſhouldſt perſwade him to part with his ſtrength and liberty and grind in a mile, he reckons you might as rationally deſire him to leap into a bottomleſs pit, to take up his everlaſting lodging in a Bed of flames, and to make light of Damnation. Let Men and Devils uſe what Arguments they will to prevail with him, now to cloſe with temptations, he is ſure he hath a ſtronger againſt them; he hath a ſenſible Argument within, which will anſwer all, if they had ten thouſand times as many more then they can produce: The love of Chriſt makes him abhor the motion; God is my Friend, daſhes all. Shall ſuch a one as I take up Arms againſt God? ſhall I that have found him ſo infinitely good? ſhall I that have experienced the Faithfulneſs of this friend to me, be ſo infinitely ungrateful as to be thus abominably unfaithful to him? Shall I that have forfeited my Life and Soul, and inſtead of Hell have received Heaven, inſtead of Damnation, Salvation, ſhall I inſtead of thankfulneſs again rebell? becauſe the Grace of God abounds, ſhall ſin abound? God forbid. To argue from mercy to ſin is the De-

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vils logick: To argue from mercy to duty is true Christianity. One that is acquainted with God can expostulate the case with his own Soul, and say! What meanest thou O my Soul to stand parlying with Satan? hast thou known what that hath cost thee already? look back to *Eden*. Who was it that dispossest thy Grandfather of that brave seat? What did *Eve* get by discoursing with such a Cheater; have you not lost enough already, but you must be venturing still? was it nothing for God of a friend to become a stranger, an enemy? was it a slight matter to be divested of all that glory that once thou didst shine in, but that now again after thou art brought into some favor, thou must be tampering with that gamester who had like to have robbed thee of all? art thou talking of returning again to *Egypt*? what hast thou so soon forgotten the Iron, and the Clay? Is this all the thanks that you give the Lord for his unspeakable mercy? Doth he that hath don such things for you deserve no better at your hands; Is this your kindness to your friend? What was it O my Soul, that that undon Creature said unto thee? Did he say, it is a little one and thy Soul shall live? what did he ask, a few merry hours that I should spare my self, that I should not be righteous overmuch? Did he so? a special Friend! I thank you for nothing? and why didst thou not answer the Tempter as *Solomon* did *Bathsheba* when she ask'd a small thing (as she thought) for *Adonijah*? and why dost thou not ask the Kingdom also? and why did not Satan ask thee to part with heaven, and thy interest in Christ, and these favours? as the Lord liveth, as small a request as thou thinkst his was,

that word was spoken against thy life, thy Soul, & vermis sum, or as the Stoick calls him, *Anim. 9 Qui suum Deum pro suo amico, qui vult pro amico placatum, pro memore ingratum habet, & qui sum beneficii memor Deo, & qui non beneficii ulciscitur Deum, non habet pro amico.* And thus he doth resist the Temptation with a great deal of gallantry, when he remembers himself. Nay, sometimes Temptations to sin do make Grace more to abound; the water which was intended to cool divine love, proves oyl, and makes that Noble flame to burn more vehemently, *Cant. 8. 6, 7.* He desires to exercise that Grace which is contrary to the vice which he is tempted to with more then ordinary vigour. He stands like a rock in the midst of the Sea unshaken; he is stedfast and unmovable, like a piller in the Temple of his God. He is much of the same mind, in that point, with that brave Heathen, who spake thus to himself when Temptation was strong. *Sen. Epist. l. 2. c. 18.) Deliberate man, yield not rashly, 'tis a great work that lyes upon thy hands, 'tis a divine work, fit for a Kingdom, the Kingdom of God.* Now remember thy God, let's see what thy love to thy God is, remember his presence, he beholds how thou standest deliberating whether thou shouldest fight for him or against him; for shame fly not thy self so basely disingenious: Remember what thy God, thy Friend did for thee at such and such a time: Remember how kindly you were entertained by him the last time you were at his house. Whose Sword is that you wear by your side? who gave you it? did not God give it you to fight against his enemies? and will you draw it against himself? Remember from whence you had all

that you do enjoy, and can you find in your heart to take Gods mercies, Gold, Silver, and Food, and bestow them all upon that which he hates? will you quarter & keep in pay with Gods coyn, his greatest enemy? And if you feel your heart still staggering, and scarce able to keep it's ground, then remember God stands by, Christ looks on, and sees how gallantly any Champion of his will demean themselves on his quarrell; and that there is not a more lovely sight upon the Earth, then to behold one of his Friends, rather venturing their lives then they will bare that the least indignity or affront should be put upon their God! O happy are they that can always act as in the sight of God! and if the Soul can have but a constant, fresh sence of it's relation to God, and his eye, it is impossible but that it should hate sin, which is so directly opposite to him: happy are those who by the thoughts of God are inraged against sin! Is it not enough (saith that heavenly Soul that is acquainted with God, that I have don such and such things against God, when I knew him not, but that I should again ingage against him after I have been obliged by a thousand mercies, after I have tasted and seen how good the Lord is? is it a light matter that I did so long fight against him then? and shall I now renew my rebellions, when I have had so much experience of the folly & madness of such a war, where I shall be as surely conquered as I draw my sword? and hath God kept me by a miracle of mercy out of Hell, and after I had run out so wretchedly; and undon my self, set me up again; after I had plaid the prodigal, received me again into favour, and shall I after all deal thus

basely by him: No, I'le dye a thousands deaths before I will willingly yield to any thing that may be in the least offensive to him, whom my Soul hath such an infinite reason to love above the whole world. The knowledge of Gods service, and Satans too, makes a Soul to distinguish; he that knows what it is to be made free by Christ abhors his old Master, he remembers full well the great hardship that he then underwent, when he had nothing to live to upon but husks, he calls to mind the Clay and Morter, he can't forget the cruel vassalage that he served under; Garlick and Onions were his dainties, and truly he can't desire to leave his Manna for such kind of food; he is not in love with the whip and scourge, he doth not dote upon the fetters, the iron which went into his Soul, but he is glad with all his heart to be free from those task masters which made him to serve with rigour, he hath no mind to return to his old work: my meaning in all this is, he that was a servant and a drudg of Satans, and a slave to his lust, when he once comes to taste the sweetness of Spiritual liberty, to be made free by Christ, he hath no desire again to be inslaved, but doth with the greatest detestation, reject all the propofalls and promises that the Devil makes to bring this business about; he knows Satan too well to love his service, he remembers that all his pay was promises and no more, he remembers that he fed him with poyson, and made him do that which had like to break his bones, and undon him for ever: he sees what Satans designes were, and what had become of him quickly if he had gon on in his service; he believes chains to be chains, though they

they be of God; he believes that poyson will kill him, though it may be sweet in the mouth; he hath now such a sence of the evil and baseness of sin, as being so infinitely loathsome to God, as that he hates it with a perfect hatred; he hath a will in some measure conformed to the will of God; and what his friend, the Lord loves, he can't hate, and where his God hates he can't love. *Psal.* 139. 20. *Do not I hate them O Lord which hate thee? and am I not grieved with them which rise up against thee? I hate them with a perfect hatred, I count them mine enemies.* Now what is it that stirs the Psalmists choller so much? Why, he had been working upon his own heart, in the former part of the Psalm, the doctrin of Gods omniscience and goodness, and by meditation upon this subject he was brought under a lively sence of the greatness of Divine kindness; and while his heart did thus muse, the fire burnt, his soul was in a flame against sin, *verse* 17. *How precious are thy thoughts unto me O God!* O when the soul hath sweet thoughts of God, it will have sower thoughts of sin. When the soul loves God dearly, it can't chuse but hate sin entirely. None behold such deformity in sin, as those which behold most beauty in God. Hence it is that some of the people of God have (nay all of them which are really acquainted with God, are of the same mind) counted it more desirable to leap into the flames, then to venture upon a known sin. It was no untruth in the absolute position, though falsly applied by *Jobs* friend, that it is a great wickedness to choose the least sin before the greatest suffering. *Job* 36. 21. What was it that made *Paul* so weary of himself?

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what burden was it that made his back so ake? what pain caused those bitter groans? Rom. 7. was it not sin? and why did not Paul groan before as well as then? was it because he then had no sin at all, or less sin then when he made that bitter complaint? no such matter, but because he had then less acquaintance with God. But now he is become acquainted with God, the more he doth abhor himself for sin. He now knows better then he did, his eyes are opened, and he sees sin in its colours, and he looks upon it as so great an evil, that he doth want words to express the odious nature of it; therefore because he can't find a worse word, he calls sin by its own name, *Sinful Sin*; which he thought a more significant phrase, then if he had called it *Devilish Sin*. What makes the children of God to be so weary of this world, and so desirous to be upon the wing? why it is because of better acquaintance elsewhere; they know that then they shall put off that carrion that now they carry about with them, Sin I mean, which like a dead carcase bound to a living, doth now stink so abominably in their nostrils; they know that then they shall have a sweeter smell, and themselves also smell more savoury in the nostrils of God. They know that poverty shall be swallowed up with riches, want with fulness, sin with holiness, misery with happiness, they have an inheritance, a glory wherein dwelleth righteousness, and nothing that is unclean shall enter into it; and when they come thither, they know the case will be altered with them, and that though now they have about with them a body of death and sin, yet then they shall have a body as pure as bright

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and glorious as the Sun, they shall be presented by Christ to the Father without spot or wrinkle or any such thing. He knows that as long as he is thus sullied by his sin, his great friend will not take so much pleasure in his company. (*Isaac* and *Ishmael*, the Ark and *Dagon*, God and Sin can't dwell in the same heart;) therefore he desires to have less of sins company, that he may have more of Gods; more of sins company, that he may have always Gods company. Observe this constantly in your own experience, and others, those which walk most close with God are most tender, as to the matter of sin, and those which are less in converse with God, are more bold in their venturing upon sin, and after it is committed they have less regret. What is the reason that one can swallow any thing almost, and another is afraid of the least appearance of evil; he hates the garment spotted with the flesh, he is as fearful of cloathing himself with wickedness, as of putting on the garments of one that hath had the Leprosie or Plague upon him; he hates vain thoughts, because he loves God and his laws, *Ps.* 119. 104. v. 113.

3. Another glorious effect of Acquaintance with God, is, that it makes one to have very low and undervaluing thoughts of the world. When the Saint hath been with *Paul* raised up to the third Heaven, when he hath had some intimate converse with God, he can look the world into almost nothing; nay, if it stand in competition with Christ, he counts it but as dung and dross in comparison of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord, *Phil.* 3. 8. he can then set a higher value upon the light of Gods countenance,

tenance, then upon Corn, and Wine, and Oyl. It is because that poor Creatures know no better, that they doat so much upon the world; did they but know what it is to have one look of love from God, were they but acquainted with the glory of another world, they would soon distrelish every thing else; nothing will down with them which have been feasted in Gods house, but those royal dainties. Taste the world who will, saith the Saint, give me but more Grace, more of Christs company, let me but maintain an intimate familiarity with God, let me be but better acquainted with him, and be more frequently refreshed with his smiles, this is all that I desire upon earth, this is all that I expect to make my happiness compleat in Heaven. *Whom have I in Heaven but thee? and there is none upon Earth that I can desire in comparison of thee.* It was not without good reason that the *Psalmist* prizes the commands of God above Gold and Silver; it was no mistake in *Solomon* to count Wisdom more excellent then the finest Gold, and more precious then Rubies. That Spiritual Merchant knew what he did when he sold all that he had for that Pearl of great price; he was sure he should be no loser by such a bargain. Bring me a heavenly Creature that hath had a view by Faith of the Glory of Gods countenance, that hath been in his company, that hath been brought into his banquetting-house, such a one I am confident can easily spare that which must keep such a fearful stir about, he can spare the world for them which are like to have no better a portion. Give him but more of those spiritual pleasures which he hath had in communion with God, and he desires no more,

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He can now speak it, and speak it in good earnest, that there is no comparison between this world and another; he can now call this world a shadow, and the glory of it grass, and write Vanity, Emptiness, and Vexation upon its beautiful Face, and contemn all its smiles and frowns, and look upon its greatest Lovers, as persons that deserve to be pitied rather then envied, whose portion is so small, whose happiness so short, and whose misery and mistake is so great and dismal. It is a common thing for men to declaim against the world, and to say, it is but a little muck; it's no unusual thing for its greatest Lovers to speak against it, and say, that it is that which passeth away; but yet for all that they pursue it more then Heaven, and are more earnest for it, then the Salvation of their Souls, and more troubled at the thought of parting with it, then at the thought of their parting with God; and the loss of it troubles them more then if we tell them of the loss of their souls: Such as these will not say, but that God is infinitely more to be loved then the whole world; but yet if the World and God stand in competition, they stand not long disputing which must give place, the VVorld hath the uppermost room in the heart. But whence is this mistake? how comes the Servant to ride, and the Master to go on foot? why is the world preferred before God? VVhy hence it is, men know not God, they are not acquainted with his excellency; the VVorld is sensible, he sees it, he feels it, he tastes it, and so he doth not the things that are invisible: and no wonder then that sense bares the sway; the man wants faith to realize invisibles, he wants senses spiritually exer-

exercised. But now he thanks now God, and is acquainted with spiritual things, he hath quite another apprehension of the World, and that not only from Faith, but sometimes from a spiritual sense, and he can say that Divine Pleasures, Riches, and Enjoyments do as sensibly refresh him, yea abundantly more then ever the world did. And when he hath been newly taking a walk in that heavenly Paradise, he looks back upon this World with grief and indignation, that he should ever love the world with his heart, when there was one that did infinitely more deserve his love, when there was a God, Christ and Holiness to be loved; that he should be such a child, such a fool as to run after Butterflies, quarrel for a feather, hunt for a shadow, while God, Christ, and Glory, those great Substances lay by unregarded. Now he grudges that any thing should have his love but his God; his dearest Relations, if they stand in Gods way, must be run over, despised, hated. That which the men of the world fight, and kill, and spare not to damn their souls for, he sees now to be a pitiful worthless thing, which can't defer Death a moment, nor stand him in any stead in another world. He's all for that coin which will go current in another Country; and if he be but rich in promises, rich in spiritual relations, rich in grace, he takes himself for no unhappy man; let the world speak or think what they will of him, he don't not much pass upon it, he believes that he is but a pilgrim and stranger here, and if he meet with no great kindness, it is but that which he expected. The truth of it is, he is almost afraid of the smiles of the world, not being ignorant of this,

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whom it kisses, it intends to betray; he can't be overfond of that which in all probability will keep God and him at a greater distance, and make his passage to glory next to impossible. He reckons that it's better being rich in grace then rich in purse; and that he which lay up for his body, and provides not for his soul, is the greatest fool in the world. Tell such a one as *Moses* of riches, honours, and preferments, he thinks them but poor sorry things for a man of *Israel* to be taken with, and he will rather see them in the dirt, then part company with his suffering brethren, much less with God. It is storied of *Anaxagoras*, that he seemed to be very little concerned when his country was in a flame, upon which being taxed by some, he made this reply, *There is none of you all care more for your country then I do for mine*; pointing with his finger up to heaven. Thus it is with the people of God; let others talk of Riches and Honour, but there is none of them all do value true Riches as they do; but here's the difference, one thinks he hath Riches when he hath the command of a great deal of Gold and Silver, the other knows he hath Riches when he hath Christ, and Grace, and can have good returns out of that other World. And which of these are the wisest will ere long be seen. One looks upon heaven and glory as a shadow, a fable, and the things of this World, as the only realities; the other he looks upon Heaven, God and Eternity, as the greatest realities, and most worthy of his highest valuation, and the things of this World as flying shadows, which can't fill the Arms of him that doth imbrace them. And under this apprehension, and

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ſence of things, no marvel that he doth prefer the ſubſtance before the ſhadow. He believes with that Worthy, that he was born for other things then to eat and drink, and ſleep, or to take his pleaſure, or to get an eſtate; he knows that the buſineſs in this world is to provide for another, to get his peace made with God, to contemplate Heaven, and to get thither; and therefore you muſt not count it ſtrange that ſuch a perſon as this is ſomewhat cold, and remiſs in his carrying on of lower deſignes; he knows that the diſproportion between finite and infinite, Times and Eternity, is no ſuch inconſiderable one as the moſt count upon. Again, he hath more then once experienced this, that the very joys and comforts that are to be had in the enjoying of Communion with God, even in this world, are unſpeakably more intence and refreſhing then the higheſt ſenſual pleaſures in the world. One that is acquainted with God will take the word of his Friend for true, which word tells him that whatſoever is preſented to his ſence, the world and all that is therein, muſt ere long be burnt up, whereupon he thinks it no imprudence at all to hazard preſent injoyments for future hopes; no folly to look after ſomething that will bear the flame. He thinks it ſcarce worth the while to be born to poſſeſs, if it were a whole world, except he were ſure of having ſomething after it that were better then what he met with here; he had rather have one ſmile from his friend, then thouſands of Gold and Silver; he would not for a world be to have his portion here, though it be never ſo large a one: he had rather by far be with *Lazarus* upon a dunghil, then ſit with *Dives* in a chair of State,

Stars, before the richeſt fare that the Sea, or Air, or Earth could afford him; he would not change conditions with thoſe which enjoy the moſt of the things of this world; he can thankfully want that which moſt commonly makes its poſſeſſors miſerable. O could you but talk with a man that lives in Heaven while he is upon earth, and could you but ſee and hear how much he ſlights that which you adore! Give me neither poverty nor riches, but food convenient for me is the higheſt that he dare pray for: He had rather live in a ſmoaking cottage, and have God for his companion, then dwell in the greateſt palace and have the Devil for his Neighbour, Conſcience Maſter. When a man hath been in Heaven by Contemplation, though his body be upon the Earth, yet the beſt part of him, his affections, his love, joy, and heart is ſtill there. *Sir Ep. 41. One that doth converſe with God here, bodily ſideſt thou earthly lump, his body is below; but could you ſee his thoughts, could you look into his heart, and ſee the inward actings of his ſoul, you ſhould ſee the man but of this world diſcourſing with God, he ſticks cloſe to the company of his Friend; He is like the Sun-beams, who though they touch the earth, yet they ſtill abide there from whence they are ſent, and are moſt intenſly hot nearest the fountain, the Sun.* So the Soul and thoughts of a child of God, they may, nay, they can't but glance upon the world; but it's moſt vigorous ſpriteful actings are towards God, and the heat of its affections are abundantly more remiſs and cool when they beat upon earthly objects. He that knows what it is to have the company of God, is almoſt ready to wonder how any one can be content with any thing below God; and as for

himself, he takes himself for little better then a prisoner, while his soul is pent up in a body which is so unwildy as to all spiritual employments, till it be refined by the grave. He would not be to dwell here for ever for a world; though he might enjoy more content then ever any since the Fall did. A Soul acquainted with God is a noble Creature indeed, it scorns petty low things, it thinks no Estate big enough for it, but that which is infinite; he looks upon himself as a Citizen of no mean City, a Denizen of *Zion*, a Free man of the *New Jerusalem*, one of the Royal Society, over which Christ, that King of Glory, is the President: his inheritance is greater than that which the Sun compasseth in its course. O when (saith such a one) shall I leave these Cities of *Cabul*, and dwell with the King at *Jerusalem*? O when shall my soul be safely ark'd! O when shall I be upon the wing for Heaven! O when shall I leave this body there whence it first came! When shall I go out of this cell, this cage! O that I were once safe in Heaven! O that I were in the immediate presence of God, and might stand for ever before him, and have his blessed society for ever & ever. Neither am I now quite without him; but how little, O how little is it that now I enjoy! O when shall I enter into the possession of that better longer life! I stay and long for that separating, or rather uniting hour, which will separate my soul from my body, from my dross, but perfectly unite me to God. Look then, O my Soul, upon all that thou seest below, but as so many Inns and resting places for a Pilgrim to take some little refreshment in, and then to be gone. That day, O my fearful

Soul,

Soul, which thou sometimes fearest as thy last, is the birth-day of eternity. O what mean we to love our prisons, fetters, burdens! What all we to be so much pleased with our miseries, and afraid of our happiness? O this unbelief! O were Christians but more in the company of God by Faith and Meditation, they would look upon God as great, and the world as a very small thing. He that knows God to be great, sees every thing below him little. It is an infallible argument of a Divine and Excellent Soul, and one that hath Acquaintance with God, when he can judge all beneath God, as low, sordid, base, and utterly unworthy of the respect of his soul.

4. Another glorious effect of acquaintance with God, is, that it will ease us of all sorrows, or cure all sorrows. As soon as any one hath but a saving knowledge of Christ, he is in such a condition as that he need not trouble his head with care, nor his heart with fear; no more then a rich Heir that hath a tender-hearted, loving, wise Father, need not trouble himself what he shall do for bread and cloathing: as long as the great cause of fear is taken away, so long he is well enough. As for those that are unacquainted with God, they either are always afraid, or have cause always to be afraid: but as for a Child of God, that Scripture buoys up his Soul under the mightiest waves of fear, *There is no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, Rom.* 8. 1. He that is in Covenant with God, may in this world undergo some petty injuries, some insurrections may be made against him; but this is his comfort, he is sure never to be quite over-powered, never to be finally conquered! O the disquietments and

fears that strangers and enemies are compassed with, or will be! And O the joys, the security, the true security that some have; at what a rate do they live! and how bravely do they dye! mark the perfect, and behold the upright man; for the end of that man is peace. This was touched upon before, when I opened the nature and qualifications of this friend, and therefore I need say the less here; yet it being the great inquiry of the wisest, how they may be sheltred from this storm? What shall they do to be cured of these heart-qualms? how they may be freed from fears? I shall not altogether pass it over in this place. I can't but incourage poor strangers, as they value the truest comforts, as they would be free from fear and trembling when the Foundations of the Earth shall be shaken, when the Mountains shall tremble, and melt at the presence of God, the Mighty God of *Jacob*, when the Heavens shall be rouled together as a Scroll, and be all of a flame. Make sure of this Friend! it is impossible that one that hath such a one for his friend should much be daunted when he hears of Warrs, and Rumors of Wars, when the Pestilence rages, when there are dreadful Earthquakes in sundry places, and such distress of Nations and perplexities, that the stoutest hearts shall sink, that hath not this to support: Then a Child of God may lift up his head with comfort, because his redemption draweth near. There is a vast difference between a godly man and a wicked, as to their affections, fears, joys, desires, hopes. The godly thinks long for that which the wicked wishes might never be; the day of Judgement. The

righteous

righteous man is even delighted with the forethoughts of that, the thoughts of which doth put a damp upon all the comforts of the ungodly, he rejoyceth in that which makes his neighbour to tremble. As for death, a gracious heart that hath kept his watch, and maintained a sweet and constant correspondency with God, and hath had his heart in heaven, and can look upon the great *Jehovah* as his friend, can't be very much affrighted, at his approach. He is not much appaled when he looks out at the Window, and sees this Messenger making haft to his house; and when he knocks at his door, he dares let him in, and can heartily bid him welcome; he understands whence he comes, and what his errand is, and though he look somewhat grimly, yet as long as he comes to conduct him to his friends house, he can dispence with that; he hath more reason to speak it then he which did. (*Plotinus*) *Let me make haft away to my Country; there are my excellent Ancestors, there dwell my noble Relations, there is in the constant residence of my dearest Friends.* (*Tull.*) *O happy will that day be when I shall come into that glorious assembly, when I shall have better company then* Homer, Orpheus, Socrates, Cato, *when I shall sit down with* Abraham, Isaac, *and* Jacob *in the Pallace of their Friend and mine! O happy day when I shall come to my Fathers house, to that general assembly, the Church of the first born, to an innumerable Company of Angels, to Jesus, the mediator of the new Covenant, and to the Spirits of just men made perfect.* A mans knowledg of other things may add to his fears, and make his miseries greater, but the more knowledg we have of God, the less our fears and sorrows must needs be; and when our knowledg

of God is perfect, all our fears and sorrows shall be for ever blown over. I can't omit a brave speech of that noble Stoick which comes to my mind, (*Ar. Epict. l. 1. c. 7.*) *If the acquaintance and favour of Cæsar can keep you (as you are made to believe) from some fears; how much rather to have God for your Father and Friend? how little cause have such to be afraid at any times of any thing. Death is self is not evil to a friend of God; he may say, come, let us go quickly to our Fathers house, our Father calls us.* And doth this seem a small matter to you; believe it, when you come to dye, you will be of another mind then; you will think thats a cordial worth any money, that will raise your spirits at such a time, and make you with a smiling countenance, to passe into an everlasting state. It is but a folly, to expect that any thing in the world should do this for us, but the knowledge of our interest in God. It's possible indeed to get some stupifying intoxicating stuff, that makes a man to dye like a beast, without any great horror, the Devils shop will furnish poor dying Creatures with enough of that; Nay, he is glad if he can keep men asleep till death awaken them; but miserable is that man who is beholding to the Devil for his Cordials; miserable is he who hath nothing to keep him from a Hell upon Earth, but his own ignorance, and the Devils word. I promise you, 'tis none of the joyfulest spectacles to an inlightned Soul, to look upon one that lived wickedly, and died peaceably. You would think, that a poor man, that is going to Execution, had little cause to smile, though he should Ride to the Gallows upon an easie going Horse, or in a Coach. The Swine is usually very still, when the Butcher is

scraping

scraping away the hair of his Throat in order to the Sticking of him. It's no unusual thing for a vile unsanctified sinner to leap with a mad confidence into eternity; but he alone hath a solid peace, who hath God for his friend. This is the only man hath just cause to sing for joy, when his soul is going into another world. It was none of the worst counsel which he gave, whosoever he was, who said, that it doth highly concern us seriously to think of terrible things which we must most certainly see ere long, and to lay in such provision as may make us fit to grapple with them when they come. O for that which will keep us from crying out hereafter? what shall I do? wo is me, I am undon: were it so that there were such rare extraction to be made which would certainly prolong our lives as long as we would, and make us always cheerful, what striving would there be to get such a receipt? O how would the great ones bring out their bags to purchase it at any rate! How willingly would they morgage all their Lands, part with their richest Jewels to buy it! & yet how little will they expend for that, which if they had would prove far more effectual! O would men and women but understand themselves, and mind their business, what sweet lives might they lead, what a calm might there be constantly upon their Spirits! How chearfully might they live! and how joyfully might they dye! *Tully* saith, that he and many others had been gathering the most powerfull herbs that they could find to cure all fears, but saith he, *I know not what is the matter, the disease is still stronger than the remedy.* And dost thou not know, O *Tully*, what's the matter? why then I

will tell thee. One principal Ingredient was left out, viz. Faith in the Bloud of Christ, and Union with God by vertue of that Bloud. He that is by Christ brought acquainted with God, need not much fear griefs, sorrows, and such things Christ was acquainted with for him: he hath unsting'd Death, and sweetned the Grave; all his troubles are now but as Physick, the Poyson of them is corrected; though the Pill be bitter, yet it's of his Friends composing, and therefore you may take it without any turning away of your head. *Shew me a man*, (said old *Epictetus*) *that is happy, truly in his life, and happy in his death; happy in his health, and in his sickness; happy when poor, scorned, tormented and banished; in a word, happy in all conditions.* O that I could but talk with such a man! O that I could see such a spectacle! such a one as my eyes never yet beheld. Why, I will tell thee the reason of it, O *Epictetus*. It is because thou never sawest a Christian, one that was acquainted with God: for let me tell the world, *I through Grace, I have seen such a sight, and do believe it to be the most lovely sight on this side Heaven.* I have seen one smiling when his jaws have been falling, and eye-strings breaking, rejoycing when most about him were weeping, and accounting it a high act of patience to be willing to live: and how do you like such a condition? Is it better to lie quivering, shaking and groaning under rejoycings and prayings, and admiring of free grace, and dealing forth the riches of Gods love and goodness: which of these would you chuse? I could easily believe that few are so bad, but that they could be contented as well as *Balaam* to dye the death of the righteous, and to have their latter

end

and like his? But would you dye joyfully? why then, you must live holily; get acquainted with God, and then this may be your state. I remember *Seneca* speaks of one *Paconius*, who when he was drunk cry'd out *Vixi* (*I have been alive*) very merrily. But had he well understood himself, he would have thought he had had much better reason to have cryed out, *I am dead, I am dead.* But however, what he said ungroundedly and wickedly, a child of God may easily and thankfully say, when he is going to his last sleep, he may with joy and chearfulness say, I have lived, and through grace, I have kept a fair correspondency with my God, my Friend, whom I am now going to dwell with for ever. Do not think therefore that I come to take away your comforts and joys, when I come to perswade you to get acquaintance with God, no such matter, I would have you learn to rejoyce, but yet I would that that joy should be born from above, that the foundation of it should be the knowledg of your interest in Gods love. Other joys may make you have a smiling countenance, but they do not raise and fill the *Soul*; for I must tell you, I am far from thinking that every one that laughs is joyful, and without fears. Give me a man that knows that God is his portion, and Heaven his inheritance, that knows with what Friend, and in what a happy state he shall live in over death, this, this is the chearful man; such a one as this is can overlook momentany sorrows, he understands full well that the case will be quickly altered with him, and the thoughts of Eternal happiness do swallow up his temporal miseries. Tell one of Gods acquaintance, of po-

verty,

verty, he values it not, as long as he knows he hath a brave estate that can't be confiscated, riches that none can take from him, a treasure that thieves can't break through to, and steal. As for all worldly things, he knows that before a few years are over, he must part with them however; he is of that mans mind, who having a considerable sum of money, and precious Jewels hid in his saddle, and a little odd money in his pocket, was set upon by thieves; who readily went to his pocket, and took what was there, and look't no further: Now the man scaping clear with his main treasure, is so joyful that he takes no notice of what was stole from him. Thus a child of God, if he loose his estate, his liberty, and all his outward injoyments, he counts all these but inconsiderable, as long as his Soul is safe, his great treasure is out of their reach. Tell him of torments, racks, flames, or what the policy of Hell can invent, he is not ignorant of this, that the more he suffers for Christs sake, the greater cause he hath to rejoyce, to be exceeding glad, for great shall be his reward in heaven, and while they add to his sufferings they add to his glory; and, though against their will, while they would injure him, they do him the greatest kindness; this light affection works for him a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. As long as his torments want that dreadful Epithite, *Eternal*, he doth not much pass; tho thoughts of Gods love makes mans hatred inconsiderable. O how sweet are the thoughts of his Friend, when his enemies are most bitter. Blessed be God as for those intolerable torments, he knows is beyond mans power, and far from Gods will to inflict

inflict them upon him, and so long he cares not much: All other tortures are but a Fleabite to to the pains of Hell, and an enraged Conscience; he can almost dare the world and the devil to do their worst, as being confident of this, that as long as he is dear to God, his Soul is out of their reach. Threaten him with banishment, he remembers, that he hath a friend that will find him out, and bear him company whereforever he is. Tell him of the barbarous unkindness and treachery of former Friends; he reads that his betters have been worse handled by their pretended Friends; above all, this cheers him, to think that all his Friends will not serve him so, he hath one Friend that will never forsake him, never be unfaithful to him. Now bring a wicked man upon Earth, that is without his sorrows, I know there is none, no not one; there is none of them all, but if he were within the sight of those devouring flames would tremble. Those that have wickedness enough to dare God, will not have courage enough to look him in the face, when he shall appear in flaming fire, to execute vengeance upon the ungodly; he that will not now be troubled at the doing of wickedness, will be troubled hereafter at the suffering for it. Let sinners say what they will, I am sure they can't be long without fears, to behold Christ, and his dear Servants coming together, in the Clouds with Millions of mighty Angels to judge the world; I am confident it will be such an amazing sight as can't choose but cool their courage, and make the stoutest heart of them all to ake; I am sure that as light as they make of Damnation, and Gods displeasure, that the day

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is coming, when they will believe it was no such cowardice to be afraid of an angry God, to flye from the wrath to come, and to run away from so formidable an enemy as sin. So that it's clear, that a wicked man will first or last be a fearful man, a *Magor missabib*, *Fear on every side*, shall be his name. But now he that doth exceedingly fear to offend God, need not exceedingly to fear any thing else; and he that fears not God, hath cause enough to fear every thing. O Sirs, it's a brave thing to be able to take death cheerfully by the hand, and to walk with him joyfully into another world; and this I say again a man acquainted with God may do: he hath this to comfort him, death doth more properly give him life, then take it away from him; and that as soon as he is dead his sin shall dye too, and his grace live and act without controul; then he shall live a life of joy, a life of perfect holiness, such a life as Saints and Angels live, such a life as Christ lives, the life of God, a life without death, an everlasting life; and why then should he be afraid of dying? As for his old Companion the body, it is gon to rest, and will ere long be awakened and rise from his bed more vigorous and fit for those Noble imployments which it must be engaged in for ever: and Soul and Body shall meet with more comfort, then now they part with pain, when the body shall be in another kind of dress then now it wears, and that also shall in some respects be like the Soul, aged, holy, immortall. This is such a man that I can call happy, and ere long will those that now scorn and persecute him call him too. Blessed is he that in his life is holy, and cheerful, but most cheerful and perfect at his death.

death. This is the happy portion of Gods acquaintance, this is the heritage of the Friends of the Bridegroom. I have read of a wise man, that would commend, and be thankful for every thing, because he was sure a friend of his had the management of every thing, whose understanding was infinite, and whose wisdom was unsearchable, who could & would work his own honour and his Friends comfort out of every thing, yea, though seemingly evil; for the greater the evil seems to be, the greater will be the real kindness which makes so much good out of it. O but I have lately lost many of my most neer and precious relations? If thou art one of Gods Friends, let me tell thee for thy comfort, you will meet them at your Friends house, when you come thither. It was no unsuitable advice that he gave to his Friend *Lucilius*, to cheer him up after the loss of a dear Friend, Let us consider my dear *Lucilius*, that we our selves should be glad to be in that place, and to enjoy that company, which you are so sad that your Friend is gon to; and he that you say is lost, is not so, but happy before you. We do not judge rightly of things. Well then, would you know what a man is? would you pass a true estimate of him, and understand his worth and value? Why then consider the man without his riches, lay aside his honours, take away all his externals from him; nay further, lets see the man naked out of his body, and how doth the Soul look? is it now rich, beautiful, joyful? can it stand confidently before God? doth it appear cheerfully in the presence of it's maker? Why, this is something. It matters not much whether his body were fed

with

with Pulse or Dainties, cloathed with Rags or Scarlet, it matters not whether his Soul went out of his mouth, or at a wound, whether he dyed in a bed of down, or in flames. Methinks, by this time you should be ready to think that Religion is an excellent thing, that Gods acquaintance is desireable, and that no life is like the life of a Christian, all whose sorrows end in joys, whose miseries make him more happy, whose shame for Christ will make for his glory. In a word, whose death brings him into life. *This is the generation of them that seek him, that seek thy face, O Jacob.*

5. Another effect of acquaintance with God, is, That it will make us more highly to honour him. Here familiarity is far from breeding contempt. Those that are strangers to God see not his worth and excellency, they honour him not, but they have the most vile, low, contemptible thoughts of the infinitely glorious Majesty, and they think any thing will serve his turn, they make more bold with him then they would do with a man like themselves, they put him off with the leavings of the world: When they have been feeding their lusts, and serving their pleasures, and gratifying the Devil all the day long; then they come between sleep and awake, and pretend a great deal of love to him, and anger with themselves for their sin, whereas God knows, they do but play the hypocrites in all they do, & mean nothing that they say: Lip-devotion, kate-religion God shall have, and but a little of that too; and that pitiful stuff that they present him with, they think God is very much beholding to them for. As for the sanctifying the Lord God

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in their hearts; as for inward hearty love, as for high prizings and admirings of God, as for a real honouring of God, and worshipping of him in Spirit, and in Truth, it is that which they understand not; and as for them which do, they laugh at them, as if they were guilty of the greatest folly in the world. But now he which converseth with God, beholds such a beauty, excellency, majesty, and glory in him, that it is ready quite to swallow up his soul; he speaks much of God, but yet he thinks more; he wonders that a God of such infinite goodness should be no more loved, that a God of such infinite greatness, justice and holiness should be no more feared, that a God of such unspeakable power should be no more obeyed; and while he remembers his own contempt of God in former times, and the too mean thoughts that he hath at present of him, he doth even stand astonished to think that he should be on this side the state of the damned. He that before thought every thing too much for God, now thinks nothing enough for him. The man is strangely changed by his new acquaintance, so that he may not improperly be called a *New man*, all things are new with him. In honor to this new guest he hath got on new cloaths, he is clad with Righteousness, as with a garment: new food, it is his meat and drink to do the will of his Father which is in Heaven; new drink, Wine on the Lees well refined, he draws all out of those wells of Consolation, the Promises: he hath new thoughts, words, and actions; God, invisibles, and all the things of Faith are now Substances with him. Now the threats or promises of a God are not counted small matters;

Heaven,

Heaven, Hell, and Eternity go for the greatest Realities, because God saith they are such. So he that sometimes lived without God in the world, had no respect at all to his glory, but valued himself and his most base lust, and the Devil himself before God, doth now respect Gods glory in all that he doth, he ventures upon nothing deliberately, but what may please him; Religion runs through all he doth; he eats, he drinks, and sleeps, and cloaths himself, he prayes, he works, he recreates himself with a design for God. The grand project he still is carrying on, is the honour of God. He will undertake nothing of importance, before he consult with, and hath the advice and direction of his Friend. Whatsoever he hath that is worth any thing, he sends it to this Friend, he presents him with his first fruits, he sacrificeth his male, the best of his flocks, desires that his Friend may be always at his house, and that he may have the best entertainment that he can possibly give; and he is ashamed at the best, that he can make him no more welcome, whom he so highly honours; he is grieved that his entertainment is no better; he would fain give God his first and last thoughts, his warmest affections; he would gladly have the strength and vigour of body and soul spent in his service; he studies how to improve all mercies and enjoyments for God, to take hold of all opportunities that he can possible, and to make the best of them for the promoting that grand Design which he hath on foot, his Honour. He thinks not wife and children, houses and lands, body, soul, and all that he can make in the world too good for him. Whatever temptations he

conquers,

conquers, whatsoever sin he slayes, whatsoever piece of gallantry or prowess he hath done in his inroads upon Satans Kingdom, he gives the honour of all to the valour, conduct, and assistance of this his noble Ally and Friend. He sets the Crown of the King of *Ammon*, like *Jeah*, upon the head of this King *David* He hath such a high esteem for God, that he thinks nothing well done, but when it is done exactly as he would have it; he thinks every thing then best, when it is done according to Gods will: and he counts it no small weakness to be unwilling that infinite Wisdom rather then folly should have the managing of all the affairs of the world. He desires to maintain a quick and lively sense of the Divine Majesty upon his Soul, and that he may here and hereafter give him, as he hath infinite cause, all honour, glory, and praise.

6. Another effect of this Acquaintance with God is this, It would put abundance of life and vigour into the soul; it would, as it were, oyl the wheels, and set them a running. There are none in the world that act at so high a rate as those do, which are most acquainted with God. O how undefatigable are they in their pains! with what earnestness and faith do they pray! as if they saw the glorious God before them, and were talking with him: with what reverence, seriousness and delight do they read, meditate and hear the Word, and do all that they do! They know in some measure what it is to present their bodies and souls as a living sacrifice to God through Christ; they understand what it means to be fervent in spirit serving the Lord: they will not serve God with that which cost

them nothing, kneeling down, and saying a few formal words before God in the evening, repeating the Lords Prayer, and the Creed, and the Ten Commandments between sleeping and waking, doing no body any wrong, and the like, is not enough to serve his turn, his conscience will not be thus put off; but he labours with all his might to stir up his soul to lay hold upon God, he is not content to go off from his knees without his Fathers blessing. This is the Friend and Acquaintance of God, this is the brave *Israelite*, that Spiritual Prince that will not let God go till he hath prevailed with him. He doth not go to his work, as if he cared not whether he work'd or no; he is not sick of the service of God, but he rejoyceth and works righteousness; his work is his pleasure, and he goes on merrily with his business. Those that are intimately acquainted with God, are not so cold, faint, and dull in the service of God, as others be. Such a one as knows God very well, and hath been oft made welcome by him, why, he comes with a great deal of confidence, and knocks at Gods door, and, for his part, he will not go away, though the door be not presently opened, but he continues knocking, because he is sure that his Friend is within, he knows that he is never from home, and that he can never come unseasonably to him. He comes to Prayer as if he were going to storm Heaven, he gets Spiritual things by violence, he comes to Duty as to fight for a Crown, he is ashamed to offer the lame and the blind to God, but he chooseth for the best in his flock; he desires to improve his interest in God to the height; this Favourite of Heaven comes frequently to the

King

King to beg some great thing or other, and he is sure that his Friend will deny him nothing, that it is not a greater kindness to deny then give; he knows that his King hath a large purse, and as large a heart, and he is not willing to lose such excellent things that are to be had for the asking for; he is not ignorant that Spiritual things are worth the seeking for, and therefore he will seek and seek earnestly; he hath tried more then once, and he remembers to his joy, that wonderful things are to be had, if we will but take pains for them, and prefer our Petitions, or rather get them preferr'd by that great Master of Requests, the Lord Jesus Christ, and follow our business close, that it can't possibly miscarry let it be what it will; the comfort in enjoying will abundantly pay all the charges we can be at in seeking; therefore he layes about him as one that is in good earnest; the confidence that he hath in the good will of God, it puts life into all his petitions. A poor Creature that very rarely injoys any communion with God, that is very little or not at all acquainted with him, is ready to take up with a few formal complemental performances, he is weary of his work before he hath well begun it, he is quickly out of breath; but now one that is very well acquainted with God, is not so soon weary of his company; it may be, he may be somewhat cold when he sets out, but by that time he hath gon a few turns with his Friend, his blood grows warm, he is sometimes so taken up with God in duty, that he can scarce tell when to have don: O he thinks it's good being there? O it was a sweet season! These are the actings and experiences of

some Noble Souls. I have heard some Christians say, that had not God made it their duty to follow their callings, they could be glad with all their hearts to do nothing else, day nor night, but hear the mysteries of Gods love in Christ opened, Read, Pray, Meditate, and be immediately engaged in the service of God. Sure something is the matter with these persons more then ordinary, that their Palate should be so Spiritualised, as that it is their Food, their Wine, their Dainties to be actually imployed in the great act of Religion. The more any one is acquainted with God, the more delight he takes in the Ordinances of God; as one of Gods Children, he desires the sincere milk of the Word; before he was acquainted with God, he found it far otherwise; then nothing almost would down with him, the pure word could not be relished, except it was adulterated with flourishes of humane wit. He had very little appetite to good wholsome Food, his stomack was ready to turn at it, except it were so cook't and sawc't, and set out, that an understanding man could scarce tell what to make of it! What do you say to this, you that are so faint and cold, in what you do, in the service of God? Come a little nearer, get better acquainted with God, and you shall find such entertainment from him, that you will scarce be able to keep long from his house; get oft into his company, and you shall feel your Soul strengthened with new Spirits, animated with a strange Life, Heat and Warmth. You will not complain that the Sabbath is the longest day in the week: you will not say, *what a wearisome is it? When will the new Moons and Sabbaths be*

at an end? But you would think long till the Sabbath day come, and when it is come, the pleasure that you take in the work of that day would make you to think it the shortest day, and gon too soon; and when you have spent it in the most diligent attendance upon God, you would wish it were to begin again, or that you were to begin such a Sabbath, that would never have an end. This is the condition of one that is very intimately acquainted with God; his nearnes to his Master, makes him to follow his work, and he knows he shall loose nothing by it; something will be coming in ere and anon, which will more then quit his cost: So that when God calls, he is at hand, and readily answers, *Speak Lord, for thy Servant heareth.* When God hath any message, any hot service to do, he accounts it his great honour to be imployed in it, and saith, here I am, send me. I believe he that spake it (*Ar. Ep. l. c. 6.*) might be a little confident, when he said, *Lay what thou wilt upon me, O God, I have power to bear it, it shall not be my Burden, but my Ornament:* Yet I am perswaded one that is acquainted with God, can say it, and say it again in good earnest; Lord what wilt thou have me to do? Wilt thou have me to Preach for thee, to run through Fire and Water for thee, to dye for thee, to go or come? O Lord do but bare me company, and give me strength, and it shall be don: I can do all things through Christ that strengthneth me. This is one of Gods Champions, he watches, he keeps upon his guard, he fights stoutly, he stands his ground, in every thing he demeans himself gallantly, he quits himself like a Souldier of Christ; and that which makes him thus valiant

is because he is so near his Captain. Ask *Epictetus* what made *Socrates* do as he did, and he will tell you, (*l.* 3. *c.* 22.) *It was because he was a Friend of God, his Servant, and partaker of his Kingdom.* This is strange Language of a Heathen! but had he known what it was to live under the most lively sense of Gods love, to have had such intimate converse with him, as some Christians have had, what would he have said? As for the Saint that keeps close to God, he keeps close to duty; his work is to serve, love, and praise God: this is his business, both by himself, and with others.

7. Another excellent effect of this acquaintance with God, is, it will make a man Patient under all the dispensations of Gods providence; in all conditions to be content, in quietness to possess his Spirit: Acquaintance with God will make him be at peace, not to open his mouth against God, whatsoever he lays upon him. What was it that kept such a calm in *Pauls* heart, when there was such a constant storm without him? was it not his sense of his interest in Gods love? though all the world were his enemies, yet as long as Christ was his Friend, he doth not care: though men and devils be against him, yet if God be for him, he passeth not much upon it: though men be never so unjust, yet God will never be so, that's his comfort. It's a small matter for him to be judged with mans judgement, as long as he is sure that God will acquit him; he knows that justice it self will do him no wrong, infinite goodness could not be unkind, and that wisdom it self could work glorious effects out of these things which the world call evil; if he do receive evil at

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the hands of God, he is confident, he deserves more; if it be good, and but a little, he is thankful, because he deserved none at all. Let the worst come to the worst, if all the Devils in Hell, and all his instruments upon Earth should combine against him, as long as he is sure of the love of God, and that none of them all, can pluck him out of the Arms of the Almighty, he is not very much concerned; Heaven will make amends for all; whatsoever he suffers, it is nothing to the displeasure of a God, it is nothing to everlasting burnings. He believes that, if his persecutors did know what he knows, they would as soon eat fire, as do as they do; therefore he rather pitties them, then is angry with them, as seeing that their day is coming! How seldom have you either *Paul* or *Silas* complaining of their sufferings! How rarely bemoaning their condition? And what is it that makes them so patient? what have they to sweeten such bitter draughts? Why, God loves them; and so long, they do not much care though others hate them. Mans frown can't sink a Soul to Hell, nor his favour make one happy for ever. It is but a little while, and all tears shall be wiped away from their eyes. The kindness, and faithfulness of God is enough to make a man cheerfully to hold up his head, when all the world is against him. When the most Spiritual Christians do complain, it is more of themselves, then of their persecutors! O my unbelieving heart! O that I should love God no more! O that my heart should be no more taken up with the great things of Eternity! This is the condition which those that are most Spiritual are in. Poverty, Imprisonment, Banishments, and all

these things which most call dreadful, when they come to a man that is much in Communion with God, they find him Patient, Meek and Calm, these are not the things which put him upon the rack; God is his Friend, and that answers all.

8. Another glorious effect of Acquaintance with God, is, That it will make all our enjoyments doubly sweet. He hath what he hath in love; he need not be afraid of poyson in any of those Dainties which comes from his dearest Friends Table; he may eat his meat with a joyful heart, and not tremble for fear of the reckoning at last; what he enjoys is freely given him; all his Dishes have this brave Sauce, they are season'd with Love, and come out of the hand of a Father. He that is the great Proprietor, hath given him leave to use these things, and hath promised also to give him better things then these. He knows that this is not his portion, that this is nothing to what he shall possess; it is no small comfort to him, to think that he shall never want any thing that is needful for him, or that if he be brought into some exigences, he hath a Friend that he can go to when he will, and be heartily welcome; he hath a portion, an estate in another Country that can never be spent, though he live at never so high a rate, and the more he spends upon it, the greater it is; he hath a key to that storehouse which can never be emptied; he hath an interest in him in whom all fulness doth dwell; his Friend is noble, let him *but ask and he shall have, seek and he shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto him.* God is so free, that he takes care of all his creatures; yea, so great is his Royal Bounty, that it doth largely provide

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for his enemies? and shall his friends, his children starve? Hath he not done so in ancient dayes? when his people were in the wilderness he sent them their Diet from his own house, he fed them with Angels food. But if this should not be, if he kept them short, that may be done with as great kindness to them as the former: fasting may fatten the soul more then feasting doth the body; and this makes all welcome. If he have a great deal, he rejoyceth to think that he shall have more still one day; if he have but a little, he is satisfied; and so his condition is made more comfortable to him, then the greatest enjoyments of the wicked are to them.

9. Another effect of this Acquaintance with God, is, That it will make a man wise. He that before he was acquainted with God had not the wit to know his Friends from his Foes, by his converse with God is made more wise then the great Sages and grand Politicians of the world. Upon his acquaintance with God, he is soon able to know right from wrong, to distinguish between good and evil. He hath now the wisdom to look after the salvation of his soul, to seek the Kingdom of Heaven in the first place, and not to be laughed and jeered into Hell. He is so wise, that he doth outwit the Devil himself; he doth get so much wisdom by his acquaintance with God, that God will reveal many of his great secrets to him. I know one my self that was little different from those which are commonly called *Naturalls*, whom when the Lord had wonderfully wrought upon, and brought near to himself, after his converse and acquaintance with God, his very natural understanding was exceedingly re-

refined, and afterward he became more discreet and fit to manage worldly affairs. But however this be, I am sure the knowledge of God gives understanding to the simple. *A good understanding have they which love the Lord; and the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.* Converse with men of wisdom doth not a little improve a man; but converse with the wise God it makes a strange alteration indeed, they are made wise unto Salvation. Of such as these *David* thought it best to make his Privy Council. These are the persons that are the fittest to advise with in businesses of the greatest importance in the world; they have learned the art of managing the affairs of greatest concernment with the greatest care and prudence. I know the wise world usually look upon these persons, as the veriest fools living. To converse with God, to take all possible *care to make their calling and election sure*, to do what one can to be happy for ever, goes amongst them for a ridiculous thing, and more then needs. But it is no great matter, they will not be beat from their work thus; they should be fools indeed, if such things as these should make them turn their backs upon God; they will not be jeer'd out of Heaven, they pass not upon mans censures. He is wise that God calls so, and he will be found to be a fool which God saith is so. As for the man that is acquainted with God, all his actions speak him a man of prudence, one that hath a deep reach with him, he is a man of an excellent foresight, he sees the clouds a gathering a great way off, the storm before it riseth, and he hides himself; in him are hid the treasures of wisdom, he makes no foolish choice, he is a child

of

of wisdom; he doth in some measure understand himself, and knows where his interest lies, and is faithful to it; he makes no foolish bargains, when he parts with Dung for Diamonds, Brass for Gold, Earth for Heaven, Sin for Holiness, present short-liv'd Pleasures for sure and everlasting Delights, the Devil for God. How say you, ye mad Gallants, that look upon the Saint as a Fool, and Religion as a ridiculous thing? Are these such foolish actings? is it so undiscreet a choice to prefer Heaven before Hell? If this be to be a fool, I wish I were more such a fool; if this be so contemptible a thing, O that I may yet be more vile! Let me say further, as great a folly as it is, there are none of you all, but ere long will wish your had been such fools. A few years will make you all of another mind, when you see what those that you counted fools have got, and what you with your wisdom have lost; then let's hear you calling them fools for chusing Christ for their portion; and your self wise for despising him, and chusing of this present world for your portion. Now, it is their being acquainted with God, that hath made them thus wise; time was, that they were as very fools as any in the world, till they fell into Gods company; and ever since that, they have acted with a great deal more prudence: their being much in Gods company hath much improved them. They may thank God for all that skill that they have attained to; for he it is that teacheth them, he is always at their elbow to direct them; when they are about to be cheated, he whispers them in the ear, lets them understand the fraud; and when God speaks, they listen to his counsel. It was no

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fallhood which *Seneca* spake (though he understood not the meaning of this Doctrine of Reconciliation) in the commendation of Wisdom. *Wisdom* (saith he) *is a great spatious thing, it instructs us both in Divine and Humane things; it teacheth a man how to demean himself in relation to things past, present, and to come; it informs him about things that are fading, and things that are lasting; and by it he knows how to put a true estimate and value on both: this learns us the difference between Time and Eternity.* Thus far *Seneca*. But where is this Wisdom to be found? not in *Aristotle* nor *Plato*'s writings. The grand Maximes of this Wisdom were little understood in the *Peripatetick* or *Stoick* schools; Flesh & Blood, Humane Wisdom improv'd to the height, reveal not these things to us. Where then is this Wisdom to be found? and where is the place of understanding? man knows not the price of it naturally: The Depth saith, It is not in me, it can't be got for Silver, &c. Destruction and Death say, We have heard the fame thereof with our ears. There is talk of Wisdom in Hell, there they can say what reports were made to them of the Excellencies of Christ and how earnestly they were offered to be instructed in the ways of Wisdom. But in Hell there is no Wisdom, though the world of them which by their wisdom knew not God be there. Where then is wisdom? God understands the way of it, and he teacheth man wisdom, and those that will come to him, submit to his instructions, may learn: the Lessons is short, you learn but by few; he tells man, that to fear and love his Maker, and to be brought into Union, Friendship, and Acquaintance with God, that is Wisdom, and to depart

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from iniquity, that is understanding. Job 28. 12, 13, 14, &c.

10. Another effect of this Acquaintance with God, is, It will make a man rich. As soon as any one is acquainted with God, he is set in a thriving way. Man at the first had his estate in his own hands, and he kept up his Trade for a little time, and but for a little time; for though his stock was great, yet meeting with the Serpent that great Cheater, he was miserably overreached, and so sadly impaired in his Spiritual Estate, that he broke presently; and had not Jesus Christ stept in and bayled him, and been his surety, he would soon have had all his Creditors upon his back, and have been laid up in that dismal prison, till he should have paid the utmost farthing; but through the kindness of Christ the grand Creditor had patience & offers to make up the business, and to compound upon better tearms then the sinner could possibly expect. Christ undertakes to heal the infinite breach, to bring God and Man acquainted, & to set him up again, in case he will but accept of the gracious terms of agreement; and thus undon man that was before in a beggarly condition, upon his return to God, is set in a better way then ever; God his Friend now takes such order for him, that he shall be sure never to break again; he will be his Cash-keeper, he will have the oversight of all, he will teach him such an art, that he shall be sure to get by every thing that he trades in, he shall gain by his losses, grow rich by his poverty, and drive the best trade it may be, when he is forced to shut his Shop doors, I mean in a time of a violent persecution. Whatsoever losses or crosses come,

come, he is sure he shall never be undon as long as his Friend hath so great a bank; he hath a key, and he can go to an infinite Treasury, when he pleaseth, and fetch out supplies for any exigencies or occasions; and when all those that made such a great show in the World, and that were taken for Merchants, that were exceeding well to pass, shall be proclaimed Bankrupts, and be found not worth a Farthing, and be carryed to prison for debt; then he hath mony in his purse, coyn that will go currant in any Country. In the mean time, though he be thought to be worth nothing, to drive but a pittiful poor trade, yet when he comes to dye, and when an exact inventory is taken of all that he is worth, he is found worth thousands: and no wonder when he hath such a Partner, that will be sure to see that his business shall be managed to the best advantage, and that he shall never be out of purse; upon this account, the man can't choose but thrive; he will have something to show for his gains, when others have nothing. When the rich ones of the world shall be begging a drop of water, he is at the fountain. If we should take a surview of that mans estate, that is acquainted with God, you must lift up your eyes to those everlasting Hills, you must look East, West, North and South, all this is his, things present, and things to come; mount up to the top of *Carmel*, your sight is too short, you see not the hundredth part of his inheritance, all this is nothing, he hath a brave estate in another Country; he is rich in Bills and Bonds, when he comes to age, he will have no man knows what fall to him; and whence hath he all this wealth; hath he not got every penny of it since he was ac-

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quainted with God. But I shall be but brief upon this Head, because I have handled, what might have fallen in here before; but the world laughs when I speak at this rate, and think that I am much mistaken; the godly man rich! that's strange! what rich with scarce cloaths to their backs, rich and fare so hardly, rich and possess nothing! this is strange wealth. I grant it, it is so, for their estate is in invisibles; it is not he that possesseth much, but he that wants little is rich: Will you call nothing riches, but Gold and Silver, and Houses and Lands? is Virtue, Grace, Holiness no riches? And will you call these little, because he hath not so much trouble and vexation with his estate as some have? is Heaven, Glory, the everlasting enjoyment of God nothing? Is the possessing that which is more worth then a thousand worlds, no riches; If to have all things that are good for them; If to have more then their hearts can conceive; If to be filled with all Spiritual plenty, be counted poverty; let me be thus poor, rather then enjoy the Revenue of all the Princes, and great Ones of the World? And what do you think of this, you that are worth never a penny? Are you desirous to have a great Estate? you that go backward, and get nothing, would be set in such a way, as that you may be sure never to break? Why then, get acquainted with God, and you can't but grow rich.

11. Another glorious effect of acquaintance with God, is, that it makes a man like God, which is the top of the Creatures honour. Company is of an assimulating nature. He that before was unholy, and like the Devil; by conversion to God,

and

and converse with him is made holy like God. He that before was cruel, fiery, unmerciful, by his acquaintance with God is made kind, meek, and lovely. He that in his natural state was a Non-Conformist to the Laws of his maker, when he is well studied in this point, is the stiffest Conformist, he sticks close to the righteous Cannons of the holy God, and will not by his good will turn to the right hand, or to the left. He that was sometimes very unlike God, when he is brought nigh unto him, his countenance is changed, his features are altered, and the lineaments of Gods image appear very lively in his face; and the more he is in Gods company, and the older he grows, the more he grows like him. O how doth such a one shine! what a Majesty, Glory, and Beauty is there in his face! the oftner he comes to God, the more he is taken with his Excellency, the more he labours to imitate him. He studies what God is; and as far as his nature is capable of it in this life, he desires to be like him. If God be true and faithful, he dare not be false; but he will hate the way of lying: if God be free and bountiful, he thinks it very ill becomes one of his children to hide his face from his own flesh, to shut up his bowels, to be void of natural affection. If purity be so eminent in God, he knows that impurity would not be commendable in himself. In a word, he desires in every thing to carry himself, as one whose highest ambition is to speak, act, and think as one that would be like God. It was bravely spoken of him (*Sen. Ep. 73*) especially if we consider what the man was, who told his Friend that call'd him to Heaven *in compendium, To get as much happiness in this place, to*

soul, while in this body is capable of, that is, to get God for his Friend, to be like him. This is a short cut to glory, a Soul carried to Heaven, or Heaven brought down to the Soul. A full and perfect conformity and likeness to God is the very Glory of Glory; and a partial conformity to him upon earth, is his unspeakable honour in this life. O were men and women better acquainted with God, they would sparkle and shine in their Generation, so that their enemies should be forced to say, that a Saint is another kind of Creature then a sensual sinner. O why stand you then so far off from God! come nearer him, and the rayes of his glorious Image will reflect from your lives; Be acquainted with him, and you shall be like him; keep much in his company by Faith, secret Prayer and Meditation, and you will be more Holy, Divine, Spiritual.

12. The last effect of this acquaintance with God, which I shall name, is this, it will make a man better, far more Excellent in all states, and relations; all his Friends will have the better life with him, the whole Family, it may be where he dwels will fare the better for him? If he be a Child, he is more dutiful to his Parent then he was, while he was unacquainted with God? If he be a Servant, he is more diligent and Faithful then before, he serves not with eye service, but doth what he doth with singleness of heart, as unto the Lord? If he be a master, it makes him more exemplary, and makes him to take care that his Houshold should serve the Lord; he had rather his servants should make bold with him then God, he is concerned for the honour of God in his Family, as much as his own; if he be a Fa-

ther, he is careful to bring up his children for God, he is more Spiritual in his affections to them, and desirous to leave them God for their Father, Friend, Portion; as he is a neighbour, he follows peace with all men, and holiness, because he hath seen God? How sweet and amiable doth acquaintance with God make a man! how ready to heal divisions! how full of goodness and charity! how ready to do good unto all, but especially to those that be of the Houshold of Faith! how compassionate, and tender-hearted! how ready to provoke others also to love, and good works; so that the whole Parish lives the quieter, all the poor fare the better, all the neighbourhood, some way or other is beholding to him; one that knows God himself, doth what he can to get others acquainted with God too? how sweetly doth he commend the way of wisdom? with what earnestness, and pitty doth he plead with sinners, and labour to teach transgressors, the paths of God, that sinners may be converted unto him. How doth he set before them the necessity of a change, the danger of their present state, and the excellent qualities of this Friend, that he would bring them acquainted with, telling them, that time was, that he also was as they are, and thought his condition as safe as they do their's; but that it pleased the Lord by his word to open his eyes, and to reveal to him the need that he had of Christ, and to inable him to accept of him, and to prize him above the whole world. In all conditions, and relations he commends Religion, and shews that godliness, where it is in the power and life of it, is a brave thing, which makes so great an alteration in a man for the

better.

better? If he be ſick, he rejoyceth, and thinks cheerfully of death, the grave and Eternity; and in this ſtate demeans himſelf ſo, that ſtanders by, can't but be convinced of the reality of inviſibles, and to think ſure there is ſomething more then ordinary in acquaintance with God, which makes men ſo undaunted, and with ſo much gallantry to meet death; ſure their condition is better then ours, or elſe they could never be ſo joyful at ſuch a time as this is; Then he tells of the uſe of a Chriſt, the benefit of a Redeemer in a dying hour, and how infinitely it is for their intereſt, in Time to provide for Eternity? if he be well, he deſires to improve his health for God, and to ſerve his Maker with the ſtrength of Body, and Soul. If he be poor, he ſhews a pattern of Patience, Meekneſs, Thankfulneſs, and lets the world underſtand that godlineſs with content is great gain? if he be rich, he deſires to be rich in good works alſo, and to trade with ſuch trifles as Gold and Silver, for rich commodities, as Grace, Peace and Glory; with the things of this world, for the things of another? To lay up for himſelf Treaſure, which neither Moth can corrupt, nor Thieves break through, and ſteal; and to make to himſelf a Friend of the unrighteous Mammon; to be a Faithful ſteward of thoſe Talents that his great Lord and Maſter hath committed to his truſt; he ſhows how great a good it is to be great and good too. This is the man which doth adorn the Goſpel: this is the Chriſtian, which doth credit his profeſſion; this 'tis to be intimately acquainted with God! O how uſeful might men and women be in their generations, were they but more in Gods company? O what

a favour would there be of their Graces in the place where they live? How would poor Creatures that receive good by their holy counsels and suitable lives, bless God for the day, that ever they were born, and adore that goodness which brought them near such and such a one by whose means God hath brought them out of the Vassalage and Captivity of Satan, and by whose help they have got acquainted with a Friend that is more worth to them then a world; for one that hath God for his Friend, can't but desire that others also should have an interest in him; they know how ill it will go with them that know not God, and this makes them to do what they can to bring God and man acquainted; they would make those that are good better, and them that are bad good? if those that he converseth with, or stands related to, were enemies, he lets them know that a Christian can love him dearly, whose sin he hates entirely, and that a child of God can pitty them, that have no pitty at all for him. I might add how oft are a great many wicked ones spared from temporal judgements, for the sakes of the righteous that are amongst them.

III. HEAD OF MOTIVES.

The next Head of *Motives* to enforce this Exhortation, might be taken from the danger of not being acquainted with God. If you could live securely without God, and be in a safe condition though you still remained a stranger to him, the business then were not so very considerable: if you could find any in Heaven that could do

much for you as God can, I ſhould not be ſo earneſt with you to get an intereſt in his favour; if you could by any means poſſible be everlaſtingly happy any other way, if without this Friend get to Heaven, and without his Alliance avoid utter ruine, I ſhould have had the leſs reaſon to uſe ſo much importunity; I might then poſſibly have ſpared my ſelf the trouble of ſpeaking theſe things, and you the trouble of hearing of them. But when I ſee and know that it is as much as their life and ſoul is worth, to ſlight and undervalue the Motions that I am now a making to you in Chriſts ſtead, how can I with any faithfulneſs and love to your ſouls hold my peace? How can I ſtand looking upon men and women that are about to murder their own ſouls, and forbear crying out? How can I endure to ſee poor Creatures running with all the ſpeed they can to that diſmal place, from whence there is no Redemption, and not endeavour to ſtop them? Would you have me ſo cruel to your ſouls, as not to tell that which doth infinitely concern their well-being? for, let me tell you, God will not ſtand neuter, he will be either for you or againſt him; he is the Lord of Hoſts, and he will fight on one ſide or other. Now ſee to your matters, as the nature of them doth require. What do you think of having a God againſt you? if God be againſt you, who will be for you? *There is no peace, ſaith my God, to the wicked.* The ſafeſt condition you can be in while God is your enemy, is ſadly hazardous; ſuch a one hangs by a twined thread over everlaſting flames; he ſtands upon the brink of that bottomleſs pit, and one ſhove, one ſlip ſends him goi g

for ever; he ſtands upon a pinacle, which one little blaſt may blow him off, and then where is the man to all Eternity? if he fall thence, there is no riſing again; if he once go into that other world, there is no recovery of him, if one would give a world to bring him back again. I ſay it again, if God be not your Friend, he will be your Enemy; and what do you think of ſuch an Enemy? It is but a word, a look, and they fal. Let me tell you, that except you ſpeedily humble your ſelves, you ſhall find that we do not make the danger greater then it is: according to his fear, ſo is his wrath; you may know ſoon enough to your coſt, what the diſpleaſure of a God is, how dreadful his arrows, how ſharp his ſword. Not a man of them ſhall ſcape that will not accept of peace upon his tearms, and that quickly too. O that will be a ſad day, when God ſhall ſay, *Bring them out and ſlay them before my face.* If God be your enemy, who do you think will be your friend? To which of the Saints or Angels will you fly? where will you go for ſhelter againſt the ſtorm of that terrible one? what armour will defend you from the dint of his weapons? what in the world can ſtand that man in any ſtead that hath ſuch an Adverſary? eſpecially when he comes to give his definitive ſentence againſt him for high Treaſon. *Dives* may ſay, Father, and *Abraham*, Son; but what comfort for all that had the miſerable Child from his holy Father? doth he not in ſtead of cooling his tongue with a drop of water, lay more burning coals upon it, & if it be poſſible, make the heat of it greater; *Son, remember that thou in thy life time hadſt thy good things.* Thus *Abraham* by putting him in mind what his condition

was

was, makes him with the greater ſorrow to feel what it is. The memory of former joys under preſent ſorrows, make them ſting the more. Well then, if you would not hereafter reflect with an aking heart upon your loſt enjoyments, think with a ſerious and thankful heart of the preſent offers, that you may in Eternity reflect with joy upon your ſhort ſorrows in time. If you will not be acquainted with God, you ſhall be acquainted with the Devil, and know whoſe company is beſt by woful experience. If you will not believe his Word, you ſhall feel his Sword. If his kindneſs and goodneſs will not melt you, his power and juſtice ſhall break you; for he that now is ſo patient, will ere long roar like a Lyon, and tear in pieces, and there ſhall be none to deliver; he will break his ſtubborn enemies with a rod of iron, and daſh them in pieces like a potters veſſel. Thoſe that will not know his love, ſhall know ſomething elſe; I will not ſay what, for it is inexpreſſible. But only this remember, it is ſuch a God that you will have to deal with, before whom the mountains quake, and the hills remove out of their places, before whom the great Tyrants of the world have fallen; and ſhall you ſtand? VVhere are all thoſe Giants? VVhere are the inhabitants of the old VVorld? VVhat is become of *Nimrod* that mighty hunter, and all his fellows? Where are all thoſe daring ſinners, that ſcorned to accept of a pardon, mercy and peace, and which had the courage to grapple with omnipotency it ſelf? who got the day? who had the worſt of it at laſt? and art thou ſtronger then they? is thy power greater, thy underſtanding deeper, thy Allyes more conſide-

table then theirs? A fly may be too hard for *Pharaoh*, but *Pharaoh* can never be too hard for God. Because judgement is not speedily executed against thee, thou thinkest therefore it may be it is because God cannot deal with thee, and upon this account thy heart is fully set in thee to do wickedly; but know thou, for all this that God will bring thee to judgement. Consider this, that as fair as it seems to be now, the winds may rise, the clouds may gather of a sudden, the Heavens may be overcast in a moment; and what will you do then? when Heaven and Earth shall be in a Flame, then you will be scraping acquaintance with God, then you will be glad to be owned by him, then you would willingly Christ should take notice of you, and say, *You blessed of my Father*; then you will you stand at the door and knock, and cry, and pray, and plead, and say, *Lord, Lord, have I not been oft at thy house? have I not eat at thy table, and taught in thy name in our streets?* and yet thou shalt be dismissed with this short and sharp answer, *Depart, I know you not.* How do you like such an answer as this is? how will you take it when you stand begging at the door for one crumb of mercy, one drop of Christs bloud, to be sent away with a bitter scorn and denial, or else to be answered with silence? Whereas you were invited to the feast as well as those that went in, and you would not hear, though God sent messenger after messenger to fetch you, you thought your oxen better company then your God, you took more pleasure in your dogs, then in the hunting after those nobler things. What do you think of such expostulations as these? what replies can you make

make to theſe accuſations? ere long you will find theſe things realities; ere long all your friends will be dead and gone, and if they would help you they cannot; your eſtate will be conſumed, your houſes will all be burnt, all your attendants, except care and fear, will ſhortly forſake you, your Gold and Silver will not ere long be worth a ruſh; and what will you do then? nay, the greateſt friends that you had will become your enemies. Little do you think, as kind as they ſeem to be, what your good fellows, the World, and the Devil will do againſt you; Little do you think how falſe your friends will prove when it comes to that, that they ſee that all is going? then they alſo will help forward your ruine. Thoſe that you durſt have truſted your life with, will accuſe you and help to caſt you. Thoſe which incouraged to ſin, will witneſs againſt for ſin. Your good Fellows, your Confederates in wickedneſs, your dear Friends, that you loved more then God, that you did not ſpare to venture your life and ſoul for, O it will make your heart ake to ſee ſuch come in againſt you, which you thought loved you ſo dearly! O to have a Wife, a Child, a Husband, an old Friend to come before the Judge, and to make known ſuch things as you hoped had been buried for ever. It will make your ears to tingle, to hear one crying out, Lord, if it had not been for him, I had turned and repented; it's long of him that I am in this wo'ul condition; I was reſolved many a time and oft to ſeek after another world, and to provide for my ſoul, but he would not let me alone when I began to be ſerious, he laughed and jeer'd me, and would never be at quiet till he had made

me

me as bad as himself; he carried me from the Ale-house to the Tavern, from thence to a Play-house, from a Play-house to a Whore-house, from thence to the High-way, from thence to the Gaol, from the Gaol to the Gallows, and from thence I came hither; and I may thank him for all this. O how will men look when they see the best friends that they had, come in thus against them! this 'tis to trust to faithless friends; this 'tis to make light of acquaintance with God. Your Gold and Silver will be a witness against you, and will eat your flesh as with a canker; your Children, Relations good and bad, will speak bitter things against you; your own Family will curse you, and say, Lord, we never heard any thing of God, except in an Oath from his mouth; we never heard any thing of Religion, except it were in derision of it in his Family; and those of us that were a little serious, and began to think of our souls, he would snib and brow-beat, and never give us a kind look till we did as he did; nay, the Devil who now doth so much flatter sinners, and make them believe that he is so much their friend, will then shew himself; he will then be as cruel as he now seems kind; he that now tempts to sin so impetuously, will hereafter accuse for sin violently, and torment for sin unmercifully. The people of God which weep over sinners, and pray for them, and wish them well with their souls, will then see justice executed upon their nearest Relations, without the least sorrow; nay, they also will come in against them too, and say, Lord, I told them of this woful day, O Lord thou knowest I forewarned them of that which is now come to

pass,

pass, I pleaded with them with all the compassion that I could, and they scorned my pity, they would not pity themselves, but made light of that glory which they are going from, and of that Hell that they are going to; and now, O Lord, thou art just and righteous, that thou hast thus judged them. This will be the language of those that are your best friends; the people of God they will be your enemies one day, if you will not now mind the making of your peace with God; they must and will, be on Gods side against all the World, they must and will take part with their Friend, and clear him when he judges, and justifie him when he condemns you. O that you that are now strangers to God, would but consider of these things! O that you would but think what this battel may be, where the combatants are so unequal. Stand still O Sun in the valley of *Ajalon*, till the Lord have avenged him of his enemies: Muster your selves, O ye stars, and fight in your courses against those miserable sinners, that have waged a war against their Maker; plant your mighty Cannons, shoot down huge Hailstones, Arrows of fire, and hot Thunderbolts? O how do the wounded fall? how many are the slain of the Lord, multitudes, multitudes in the valley of Decision, for the day of the Lord is terrible. Behold Gods enemies falling by thousands, behold the garments rouling in blood, hear the prancing of his terrible ones, the mountains are covered with Horses and Chariots of fire. Gods Souldiers run from one place to another with their flaming Swords in their hands, Arm'd with the justice of God, jealousie, power and indignation! O the dreadful

slaughter

slaughter that is made. Millions, millions fall, they are not able to stand, not one of them can lift up his hand, their hearts fail them, paleness and trembling hath seized upon the stoutest of them all. The bow of the Lord is strong: from the blood of the slain, from the fat of the mighty, the bow of the Lord turneth not back, the sword of the Almighty returns not empty? How do the mighty Ones fall in the midst of this battell! A hot battell indeed in which none scape? Who is he that cometh from *Edom* with dyed garments from *Bosrah*? This that is glorious in his apparel, and travelling in the greatness of his strength, the Lord of Hosts is his Name. Wherefore art thou red in thy apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth the wine-fat? I have troden the winepress alone, and of the people there was none with me: For I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury, and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment, for the day of Vengeance is in my Heart, and the year of my Redeemed is come. And I will tread down the people in mine anger, and make them drunk in my fury, and I will bring down their strength to the Earth, the hand of the Lord shall be known, the power of the mighty *Jehovah* shall be felt, and his indignation towards his Enemies; For behold he will come with fire, and with chariots like a whirlwind, to render his anger with fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire: For by fire, and by his sword will he plead with all flesh: and the slain of the Lord shall be many, and the Saints shall go forth and look upon the Carcases of the men that have transgressed a-

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gainſt me: for their worm ſhall not dye, neither ſhall their fire be quenched, and they ſhall be an abhorring unto all fleſh. Upon the wicked he ſhall rain ſnares, fire and brimſtone, and horrible tempeſt. This ſhall be the portion of their Cup! This 'tis to fight againſt God! This 'tis to defie the Lord of Hoſt! This 'tis to refuſe a peace that would have been ſo unſpeakably advantagious! To ſpeak a little plainer, this is all that ſinners are like to get by their ſtanding it out againſt the tenders of Grace and Mercy. And are you ſtill deſirous to engage in this dreadful war? Will you ſtill bid defiance to the Almighty, and make nothing of ſuch things as you have heard of? Is the loſs of your blood, the loſs of your Soul, your utter undoing for ever, no great matter with you? Well then, go on bold ſinner, Arm thy ſelf *Cap-a-pee*, gird thy ſword upon thy thigh, get thy ſhield and buckler ready, prepare to meet thy God: Go up, O thou valiant Warrior, and let's ſee thy valour, behold thy enemy hath taken the field; go up, and look thy God in the face if thou dareſt, come ſhew thy ſelf a mark for God, and turn not thy back like a coward, venture upon the mouth of the Cannon, ruſh upon the thick boſſes of Gods buckler, if you long to periſh everlaſtingly. You have heard what the war will coſt you, and as you like it now, do. And what do you laugh at all this? well then, go on, but be it upon your peril, your blood be upon your own Soul: As for me I could not have ſaid much more then I have, to diſſwade you from this deſperate enterpriſe; I foreſee what a caſe you will be in, when you are in the heat of the battell, and I deſire to weep in ſecret for thee,

as one that will moſt certainly be undon, if thou doſt not ſpeedily alter thy mind; wherefore my loyns are filled with pain, pangs have taken hold upon me, as the pangs of a woman that travelleth, I am bowed down at the thoughts of of thy miſery, I am diſmayed at the ſeeing of thy deſtruction. The ſinner ventures for all this! He is marched into the field! Set a watch-man; let him declare what he ſeeth. Who meets that furious wretch? A Lyon, a lyon roareth, he is torn in pieces, and none can ſave him, he is gon! he is gon! he is gon for ever! and who may the mad man thank for all this? Who could help it? He would venture though he was told as much. Well then, ſee whats like to befall the enemies of God: You hear what is like to be the condition of all them that will not be acquainted with God, Firſt, or Laſt, you likewiſe may behold what a caſe you your ſelf ſhall be in ere it be long, except you do ſpeedily repent of your folly, and meet your adverſary in the way, and humble your ſelf before the mighty *Jehovah*; ſpeak quickly? What will you do? Turn, or Burn; Repent, or Dye. Yet you do but hear, you do not feel; but thouſands, and millions feel what the diſpleaſure of God is, what the breach of his Covenant is, and what the effects of a war with the Lord of Hoſts is. O be wiſe by their falls, let their deſtruction be your inſtruction; take heed what you do, leſt you be the next that God ſhall deal with as an enemy: As yet God offers to be Friends with you; but whether God will do as much to morrow as he doth to day, I do not know. I tell you but ſo, it's hard putting it to the venture. Remember you had large

proffers

proffers of Grace, and pardon made to you, God hath ſent us to let you know his will and pleaſure, and we demand of you from him to give us your anſwer ſpeedily. And what can't you yet reſolve? Is it ſo difficult a buſineſs to determine what to fix upon? O fooliſh people, and unwiſe! O unſpeakable madneſs! How juſt muſt their condemnation needs be, who are offered ſalvation ſo often, and refuſe it? who are ſo oft told of damnation, and yet run into it? in a word, who might have God for their Friend, and had rather have him for their enemy.

4. The next head of *Motives*, by which I might inforce this duty of acquaintance with God, may be taken from the examples of them which made all the Friends they can to get acquainted with God. Behold a cloud of witneſſes, which do all with one conſent ſpeak high in the commendation of this Friend, that I am perſwading you all that I can to be acquainted with. Are you wiſer then all your neighbours, is the ignorant objection of ſome that would take it very heinouſly, if we ſhould call them fool, when we put them upon a ſerious diligence in peuſuit of the beſt things? Why, let me retort this objection upon themſelves, are you wiſer then *Enoch* and *Noah*? have you more underſtanding then *Abraham*, *Iſaac* and *Jacob*? Have you more wit then *David*? Are you wiſer then *Heman*, *Daniel* and many others of thoſe brave worthies, which were the wonders of the world, the Non-ſuches of their age, and a pattern to future Generations? This was the greateſt piece of their wiſdom to walk with God, this was the beſt of their policy to get ſo potent an Allie; this ſpake them to be men of

a deeper reach, and a larger understanding then others; because they made it their business to get acquainted with God, and thus to make their interest as large as Heaven, and their peace and prosperity as sure as the oath of a God could make it. Do you think that all these men were mistaken? did their wisdom lie only in a prudent management of their worldly affairs to their best advantage? what then, did they mean some of them to leave all that they had so chearfully upon the command of God? dare you say that they prized the favour of God at too high a rate? as for their parts, they thought they could never value such a friend as God too much. What else was the meaning of their longing, panting, and breathing after him? Why else are they so glad of his company, his presence? How loath were they to do any thing that might be in the least displeasing to him? What bitter moans did they make, if he did but withdraw a while, if he did but a little absent himself from them? how wonderful desirous were they of enjoying communion with him? how earnest to live in his house for ever? Dare you say that they were all fools and mad men for refusing the embraces of this present world, for slighting its smiles, and undervaluing its greatest kindnesses, and choosing the favour of God, though with the scorns and reproaches of the world, rather then to hazard his anger, whose wrath burns to the bottom of Hell. Behold, what a glorious company of these stand upon mount *Zion* with Harps in their hands with those hundred and forty and four thousand, and the Lamb with an innumerable multitude of all Nations, People, and

and Languages. Why all theſe were of the Friends and Acquaintance of God, or elſe they had never had thoſe Crowns, Robes, and Palms in their hands. Now, why ſhould not our ſouls be as dear to us as theirs were to them? Will not Heaven be as good for us as them? is it not as needful for us to get a friend of God, as them? Will not God do as much for us as them, if we will but do as they did, walk with him. The truth of it is, the number of them which are ſaved is but few, in compariſon of the multitudes of them which know not God, and go the broad way; yet for all that, take them abſolutely, they are abundance; ſo many that the Scripture ſaith they are innumerable. Do but read over the Hiſtory of ſome of their Lives, turn over the holy Records, look ſometimes into thoſe Sacred Chronicles, and behold how chearfully they ſerved God, how actively they followed the Lamb whereſoever he goes, through thick and thin. Hear what their language is now they are got home ſafe, now Chriſt hath brought them to glory, and they are at their Friends houſe. What do they talk of? what is their diſcourſe about? do they complain what a ſad journey they had of it through a howling wildernes, after they had paſſed the Red ſea, through a thouſand ſorrows and trials? do they ſay that now they are at their journeys end they are weary, and wiſh they had never taken ſo long and tedious a journey? do they not rather ſpeak the quite contrary, and that if it were to go again they would do it with far more ſpeed and chearfulneſs then they did? Liſten, hark, methinks I hear them from the walls of the *New Jeruſalem* crying out, Come

away, come away, fall on bravely, follow your busines gallantly but a little while longer, and the City is your own; fetch your scaling ladders, run up apace, mount the rampiers, fear nothing though the Devil play his Artillery upon them, yet it is but powder, he shall never give you a mortal wound; resist him and he will flee, and the field is yours; the Spoil, the Crown, the Honour will pay for your pains, bloud, and danger. Fall on brave souls, fall on; the valianter you be, the more safe you are. Methinks I hear those noble Saints encouraging of you to get acquaintance with God, and saying to you that are yet afar off, come near, Come away poor souls, come away, what do you mean thus to delay? O little do you think what a friend we now find of God; it was but a little, a very little that was told us of the excellency of Christ and the glories of this place, to what we experience; It was no false report that we heard when we was upon earth, of the happiness of Heaven: O here's a prize worth the running for; a Kingdom, a Crown worth the fighting for, an Estate worth the looking after. We have not now our stint, we are not dieted with those Spiritual Dainties, we have not now and then a sip, a draught, a bit in a corner, but we are at the fountain, we are daily feasted with infinite pleasures, our hearts are full, brim full, they run over, we swim in an ocean of spiritual enjoyments; these things are beyond your capacity now to understand. Were we to live upon earth again, and did we know what we do now know, we should ever pine with our earnest longing for God, the living God, to be in his immediate presence, and to be at that ange-

angelical work of praiſing, ſerving, and loving him for ever. Wherefore brethren, let us encourage one another, *Come let us go up to the houſe of the Lord; his dwelling is in* Salem, *his palace is upon mount* Zion. Why ſhould not we go on as merrily in the paths of Wiſdom, as the wicked in the road of Hell? How do the Devils Champions encourage and hearten one another up? How do they laugh, ſing and roar, as if their life were the only life; for ſhame let's tell them they lye in their teeth. Who hath the beſt company, they or we? the Patriarchs and Prophets, the Apoſtles and thouſands of Martyrs are gone ſinging before; ſome of our dear Relations, Fathers, Brethren and Siſters are newly welcomed by Chriſt to his Fathers houſe, and they are bleſſing that rich mercy that hath conducted them to ſuch a place, to ſuch a friend; we have many thouſands of Saints Militant that are going along with us as faſt as they can, and God himſelf will bear us company, and why do we yet linger? O that we were upon the wing! O that our ſouls were like the Chariots of *Amminadab*! O that the Lord would ſtrengthen poor ſhort-winded Creatures! O that we could run and not be weary, and walk and not faint! O that we might have now and then a hearty meal, and that in the ſtrength of them we could travel to the mount of God! O that that acquaintance might now be happily begun, which may never have an end! O that God would viſit us oft, and get into our hearts! O that he that gave thoſe Worthies in former times ſo much grace, would pour out of the ſame grace in abundance upon our ſouls! O that he would ſhed abroad his love in our hearts! O that

we could maintain a constant intercourse with him here, till we come to a perfect enjoyment of him in glory hereafter! O that we may see thy face, thy blessed face by faith! O that thou wouldest cause thy glory to pass before us! O that thy marvelous loving kindness might be made known to a company of poor Creatures of us, whose desire is to fear thee, who would fain love thee with the strength of our souls! O blessed are they that love thee, that are beloved by thee!

5. I might also insist upon another Head of *Motives*, which is named in the Text, which is this, *Acquaint now thy self with him, and thou shalt be at peace.* Though there be nothing but War on every side, you shall have peace. This peace of God, whatsoever you may think of it, is unspeakably advantagious; the benefits that would accrue to a soul upon this peace are infinite; It is a *peace that passeth all understanding.* When we have this peace concluded, we may drive a brave Trade without disturbance for the richest Commodities. If we were thus acquainted with God, we shall have such a peace as that we may laugh at the shaking of the spear, and not be much disturbed when we hear of dreadfull things abroad in the World. He that is acquainted with God may safely venture up and down, he hath Gods pass, a strong man of war for his convoy, he hath such powerful allies that he need not fear; as long as he is at peace with God, he is sure not to be quite overcome by man. He is at peace with himself, when the Aire ecchoes with Drums and Trumpets, and the roaring of Guns, a musick that pleaseth the

Devils

Devils Ear; He may ſtill rejoyce, becauſe he hath a bird within, which ſings ſweetly; there is a harmony between his will and Gods, a harmony between his heart and his mouth. This is no ſuch contemptable thing, and if you knew what a wounded Spirit, a fire in the boſom is, you would ſay ſo. This peace that ſuch a one hath, is a wel-grounded peace; not ſuch a one as is built upon ignorance, and hardneſs of heart; but ſuch a peace as reſults from the ſenſe of the pardon of ſin, and reconciliation with God, through the blood of Chriſt; That blood of Chriſt hath waſhed his conſcience from dead works. Sins he had, and hath, but ſome of them he ſees lying dead like the Egyptians upon the ſhore, others ſtriving for life, with a deaths wound upon them; and though he have enemies ſtill living, yet they are ſuch as ſhall never have the abſolute dominion over him: as long as the great quarrel between him and God is at an end, all is well enough, the Law hath nothing againſt him, all his accuſers are ſilenced; Chriſt hath fulfilled and ſatisfied the Law for him; The great Creator hath given a full and general acquittance, all debts are diſcharged for him, and therefore the man hath little reaſon to trouble his head much with cares and fears; now he may go up and down any where, and not fear the Serjeant, his noble ſurety hath paid that vaſt debt, he hath laid down the ten thouſand Talents upon the Nail, ſo that the man is at peace with God, he is alſo at peace with all the Creatures in the world, from the glorious Angels that are in Heaven, to the meaneſt inſect or plant; they are ſo far from doing him any real harm, that they all are ſer-

vants to the Friends of God, they all ſtand ready to oppoſe their Enemies; and thoſe of them that are mortal are ready to lay down their lives for one that ſtands thus related to God. For when any enters into Covenant with God, God alſo makes a Covenant for them with the beaſts of the field. Great peace have they that love Gods law, and nothing ſhall offend them; ſuch a one is at peace with death and the grave. We read of ſome profane Monſters that made a Covenant with death, and were at an agrement with Hell; but this Covenant will ſoon be broken, becauſe he that hath the keys of death and Hell, the power of life and death, never ſubſcribed to the Articles of their agreement. But now the godly man hath a Friend that hath made a Covenant for him, a firm Covenant with death, and Hell, ſo that none of them ſhall ever do him the leaſt wrong. As for death, Chriſt hath took out it's ſting; as for the grave, Chriſt hath ſpiced, and ſeaſon'd it, it's Power is maſter'd, it's Terribleneſs is taken away; it's now no Priſon, Chriſt hath opened the doors of it, and now it is but a Chamber of repoſe, a bed to reſt in, and he that hath already opened; this door, when it was bolted, barr'd and doubled locked, can and will ere long open it again, and awaken his from their ſleep; and is this inconſiderable? Is not ſuch a peace as this is, deſireable? Who that is well in his wits, would not be glad to be in ſo ſecure a condition as this peace will put him in? And who are like to have the benefit of this peace, but the Friends of God! O therefore if you value your own peace, if you would be undiſturbed from ſtorms without, and Heart-quakes within;

within; If you would have all the Creatures in Heaven and Earth at peace with you; If you would have death unſtung, and the grave a Chamber, and not a priſon, why then, get acquainted with God, and you ſhall be at peace.

6. The next head of *Motives*, I might take from theſe words, *Thereby good ſhall come unto you. Acquaint your ſelf with him, and be at peace, and thereby good ſhall come unto you.* But I ſhall here be but brief. Think of what you will that is good for you, and if you are acquainted with God, you ſhall have it for asking for; or that which is far better then that which you deſire: For the Lord God is a Sun, & a Shield; he will give Grace and Glory, and no good thing will he with-hold from them which walk uprightly; that is, from thoſe that are acquainted with him. All his ways are mercy and truth, to ſuch as be in Covenant with him; and all ſhall work together for good, to them that love him. Inlarge thy deſires as wide as the Heavens, requeſt what you will, ask never ſo much, and you ſhall have it; and what would you have more? If it be the good of profit that you deſire; What greater gain then godlineſs? Who can give ſuch rewards to his Servants as God? Who will give greater portions to his children then this Father? Who is like to thrive better then he, who hath ſuch a vaſt Stock, ſuch a great Trade, ſuch quick, and great returns, and above all ſuch a Partner? O that thoſe that are all for profit and gain, that cry out, what advantage ſhall it be to me, if I ſerve God? and what profit to me, if I am acquainted with him? O that ſuch would

but do that which will be moſt for their profit, I would deſire no more of them then this. O that they would but try what a gainful Trade Religion in it's power is! The greateſt Merchants that ever walked the Exchange, if they be not acquainted with God, and have not Chriſt for their Factor, are but Pedlars to the Saint. One that is acquainted with God, gets more in one Hour, in one Prayer, at one Sermon, in one Meditation, then all the rich men of the world are worth, put all their eſtates together: One receives his peace, the other his pounds, the one hath by way of return a great deal of troubleſome Lumber, the other his Box of precious pearls, and a Jewel of an infinite value. O little doth the laborious worlding think what poor and ſmall gains his are, when he gets moſt, to what this Spiritual Merchant gets, he would not ſell what he gets ſometimes in one morning, for all the riches of both the *Indies*. He trades in ſuch Commodities which will not ſuffer dammage upon the Sea; his veſſel is light and ſtrong, the Maſter of it never made a looſing voyage. All his wares are unvaluable; and though his ſhip be in many a dreadful ſtorm, though ſometimes ſhe be becalm'd, though it be long before ſhe return; yet as long as ſhe hath ſuch proviſions within, ſuch a Pilot, ſuch Ankors, ſhe can't miſcarry, ſhe will come into the Harbour Richly Laden; The world will not believe this, but I am ſure there is never a man breathing, but will ſooner ſay that no gain is like the gain of Chriſt and glory. One return from Heaven, one anſwer of Prayer, one ſmile from God, one look of love, the head of one *Goliah*, the death of one Sin, one

Soul

Soul brought home to Christ, one drooping Soul comforted, is a greater mercy (for all the ignorant world make nothing of such things as these) then to be invested with the greatest Honours, then to be possessed of all the Riches, then to enjoy all the Pleasures that the whole world can afford. But O were mens eyes opened, were men within sight of those devouring Flames, then they would believe that a Christ were worth the having, Grace a Pearl that can't be overvalued, and that no trade was comparable to a Spiritual Merchant, no Art like that, by which one may turn every thing into Gold. But if it be the good of pleasure you look more after; can there be greater pleasures then those which are in the presence of God? can there be any greater pleasures then to rejoyce in God, and to be made welcome by him, then to drink Flagons of that excellent Liquor which is better then wine? Can there be better musick then to hear so many Millions of sweet voyces singing *Halelujahs*! O there's a Consort! There's Melody indeed! If you desire that other good, the good of Honesty, a rare accomplishment, perfection of Grace, purity of Soul, wherewithall shall a young man choose his ways, but by taking heed thereto, according to his word. Well then, lay all these *Motives* together, and let's see whether they will any whit prevail. If the nature of the person with whom I would fain have you acquainted. if all these admirable qualities that are in him (if I may so call them) may signifie any thing, if all those glorious effects of acquaintance with God, weigh any thing with you, one would think by this time you should be well resolved. If the

danger

danger of not being acquainted with God, may make you afraid of ſtanding it out; if good or evil, if peace or war, if life or death, if all this be as much as nothing, what then is ſomething? If the frequent pleading of mercy, if the blood of Chriſt have any voyce, if the expoſtulations of his embaſſadors may be heard, why ſhould you not then be perſwaded? If all this will not move you, what can we ſay more? if we could ſhew you Heaven and the glories of another world, could we let you ſee the face of Chriſt, could we any way in the world reach you hearts, and perſwade you by any means to minde the things of eternal peace, we would do it with all our hearts. If we were ſure to get you with us, and to bring you acquainted with God, we could willingly come begging on our bare knees to you, and beſeech you to be reconciled to God. We ſee that diſmal day a coming, and are grieved to think what a ſad taking you will be in then; we know the caſe will then be altered with them, which will not be perſwaded to be reconciled to God. O what a woful condition will they be in, which have heard or read theſe Sermons, and yet for all that would not mind the looking after acquaintance with God! How will ſuch wiſh that they had never been born, or that they had their being in ſome of the dark ſavage corners of the world, where they might never have heard of the Doctrine of Reconciliation, being acquainted with God and Union with Chriſt, peace with their offended maker, rather then having heard of theſe things to make light of them! O to hear of ſuch a friend, and to have him for an enemy; to hear of Peace, and to chooſe

War;

War; to hear of Heaven, and go to Hell, this is ſad indeed. It would have been far better for ſuch, that they had never known the ways of God, then after they have known them, to go in the ways of folly. O that men and women had but ſuch ſerious thoughts of theſe things as they will have ere long! O that they would but believe Heaven, and Hell, and Eternity to be ſuch Realities as ſhortly they will! O that mens hearts were but affected with things, as they will be when their ſouls are juſt a going, or a little after they are in another world! But O the miſerable condition of the world! O the lamentable ſtate of Profeſſors, that make no more of the favour or diſpleaſure of God! nay, may I not ſay, O the folly of the Children of God themſelves, that are no more in Gods company, when they know they may be ſo welcome, when they have taſted ſo oft of his kindneſs, when they were made ſo much of the laſt time that they gave him a viſit. Are not men in a deep ſleep, that they do not hear? are they not blind, that they do not ſee? are they not ignorant, fooliſh, and mad, that they do not underſtand their intereſt any better? It is not without good reaſon, that the Spirit of God doth ſo oft cry out upon ſinners for their folly; the Scripture ſaith not in vain, *That there is none that hath underſtanding, no not one.* No wonder that they which have but half a cure ſee men like trees, that thoſe which never had a through work do not prize Chriſt. O but that thoſe which have been brought nigh by grace, who were ſometimes afar off, that ſuch ſhould be ſo much ſtrangers; for thoſe that have met with ſuch kind entertainment at his houſe, for

theſe

theſe to keep off ſo, to come ſo ſeldom, for them which have fed ſo high at the Kings Table, to fall to their traſh, their husks, this is a ſhame indeed; as if the Devil kept a better houſe then God. Chriſtians, doth God deſerve this at your hands? How unkindly do you think he takes this from you? what will the world ſay? look how his own acquaintance deſpiſe him? how will the Devil inſult? O how do the hearts of your fellow Chriſtians ake to ſee how ſtrange your carriage is? how do they tremble to think, what if that fine houſe be built upon the ſand? Chriſtians, you which ſeldom or complementally viſit God, bethink your ſelves well what you do when you begin to be cold in your affections to this Friend, remember from whence you are fallen, and repent, and do your firſt works; remember what entertainment you have ſometimes had at Gods Houſe; forget not all his kindneſſes; of all the creatures in the World you have no cauſe to carry your ſelves ſo towards God. I tell you again, the world ſtands by, and looks on to ſee what there is in you more then in others; they mark your lives more then you are aware of, it may be; wherefore look to your ſelves, take heed how you carry your ſelves before them. O why ſhould they ſee your faces pale, when you may feed ſo highly? O ſhew them by your countenance, that you feed upon wholſome food! O let your breath ſmell ſweet, let your diſcourſe be more ſavoury of the things of God! Labour to maintain a ſweet, conſtant, unintermitted in-

tercourſe

tercourſe with God, to walk with him. O little do you think what you looſe by your coming ſo ſeldom to this Friend. I appeal to your own experience; was not that diſh you eat laſt at his table ſvveet? and vvhat do you think that God doth not ſtill keep as good a houſe as he did? do you believe that he hath ſpent all his beſt vvines? can that fountain ever be emptied? is there not bread and good chear enough in your fathers houſe? Believe it, God hath other kind of entertainment, richer chear, better fare ſtill to make you vvelcome vvith, if you vvould not be ſo ſtrange, if you vvould but come oftener to him. As for Chriſtians, methinks I need not uſe ſo many vvords to perſvvade you, methinks you that knovv hovv ſvveet his company is, ſhould deſire to be never out of it. Chriſtians, I tell you plainly, if you ever expect true peace in your life, and true joy and comfort at death, it's your only vvay to keep cloſe to God, viſit him oft by ſecret Prayer and other kind of Duties, and then you ſhall ever and anon meet vvith that vvhich vvill ſvveeten your greateſt diligence, and abundantly make amends for your pains. Knock at his door, ask for him, and reſolve to ſtay till he come; though he come not at the firſt, ſecond, or third knocking, yet I am ſure he is vvithin, and vvill come at laſt, if you vvill but vvait; and vvhen you have once again met vvith him, O let him not go, but tell him ſeriouſly that you can't bear his abſence, he ſhall be your God and Friend living and dying, death it ſelf ſhall not part you. Go alſo and tell your

Friends

Friends you have found him vvhom your ſoul loves, that you have met vvith Jeſus, and ſee if you can get them to come out and ſee him, bid them to taſt and ſee how good the Lord is; commend him all you can to your poor Chriſtian Friends. But you are not the perſons that I intended to ſpeak to, only thus a little by the by, that I may a little vvarm my ovvn heart and yours in this great duty of maintaining an intimate cloſe converſe and acquaintance vvith God. But my buſineſs is to go out into the High vvays and hedges, and to invite poor vvandring ſtrangers that have nothing to live upon themſelves, and that do not knovv vvhat a noble open houſe God keeps, that never taſted of his kindneſs in Chriſt, to come to this Royal Feaſt, and to eat their fill of ſuch food as they can never eat too much of, never be ſurfeited vvith. *Vnto you O men I call, and my voice is unto the ſons of men. O ye ſimple ones, underſtand wiſdom, and ye fools, be ye of an underſtanding heart*, Prov. 8. 4, 5. *Hear O ye deaf, and ſee O blind: let the dead hear the voice of God, and live.* Then hear vvhat I have been ſpeaking of: I have almoſt don my meſſage, conſider well of theſe things as you tender the diſpleaſure of God, as you value your Souls, be ſerious; remember what it is, that I have been diſcourſing to you about, Read it over again, and ſtudy on it; Read and Pray, Pray and Read, and turn this exhortation into Prayer; take with you words, and ſay! O that this might be the Sermon that might bring me acquainted with God! O that this might be the man that might bring me to ſome knowledg of Chriſt! O that this might be the happy day wherein a Match

may

may be concluded between my Soul, and the precious Jesus? But alas, alas, where are the hearts that are thus smitten? where are the Souls that are any whit taken with this infinite beauty? How few have any real love or good-will for Christ? O who hath believed our report, and to whom is the Arm of the Lord revealed? Though I and many hundreds more have been pleading thus with sinners; though some of the Embassadors of peace weep bitterly, that their message is no more kindly entertained, though their publick Preaching be followed with private Prayers and secret Groans, though they expostulate the case with poor refractory Creatures with all the earnestness that they can for their lives, though we use the most powerful arguments that we can, and deliver them with all the vehemency, seriousness and compassion that we can for our Souls; yet how are the greatest part of our hearers unconcerned? Is not a great part of our Auditory as stupid and senceless as the very stones they tread on? The more is our sorrow; we fear as to the most of them that hear us, what we speak is lost. It may be they may be a little affected just at the hearing, or for an hour or two; but O that these truths might have a lively, and abiding impression on mens hearts! I fear, O that they were causeless fears! I fear that most of you that have heard of these things will go away, and quickly forget what weighty things you have heard; perhaps some of you may say, the man was very earnest, and some of his expressions were piercing. O Friends I hope it is not your commendation that I desire? O that I may with a single heart respect Gods glory! I

say

ay again, I would not be pleased with your praise, nor would I fear your dispraise; it's your Souls I want, and may but I manage my great work in this successfully, and see you acquainted with God, before I leave you for ever, I hope I should be contented to be trod in the dirt. O that my heart may not deceive me! O that my compassion to your Souls were greater, a thousand times greater! O that I could never speak to you of such things as these without tears. I must again, and again profess I am ashamed of my heart, that it is no more sensible of these weighty affairs! But O mighty and glorious God, if thou pleasest, thou canst out of the mouth of a Babe and Suckling ordain strength! O that thou wouldest make the worm *Jacob* to thresh Mountains! O that thou wouldest make use of the most unworthy and weakest instrument, in that honourable Service of bringing home some Souls to thy self. O if but any one Soul, if but one Soul that was estranged from God, might by these lines be brought acquainted with him, if I might prevail with any other stubborn Enemy to lay down his weapons, and be Friends with him, I should think my pains well bestowed, though (if that will make you to regard it ever the more) this work hath cost me many an hours study, and it hath been interrupted with many bodily distempers, groans and sorrows, fears and sighs. Yet if after all my travel, I may hear of any Children born of God; if I may meet but one soul the better for it, by it brought to Glory, I shall have abundant cause to bless my God, and to rejoyce that my labour hath not been in vain in the Lord. But if I might have

more

more, I ſhould have more cauſe to adore infinite goodneſs, and Rich Grace! O my dear Friends! O precious and immortal Souls! What ſhall I ſay to you? What ſhall I do for you? O did you but know how hardly I fetch my breath at this time, did you but ſee what a crazy Creature he is that writes to you, did you but know how faint he hath been ſometimes in ſpeaking to you, you would go nigh to pitty him. O pitty your ſelves! O pitty your own Souls, that ere long muſt be turned naked out of your Bodies, and hear the expoſtulations of a dying man that would gladly live with you in everlaſting glory, and meet you all among the Friends of the Bride-groom, that I may ſee you among the Sons of God, in your great meeting, when the Father ſhall ſend his Servants the Angels to fetch all his children home to his own houſe. O pitty your Souls, and let not all my pains be loſt, trample not under your feet the blood of the Covenant, neither count it a common thing; remember that the ſlighting of Chriſt is a dangerous thing, the loſs of his favour, and the loſs of your Soul, muſt go together? O how ſhall I leave you? how ſhall I part with you, ſhall I go before my work is don? What ſhall I ſay more? what arguments ſhall I further make uſe of? O that I knew what to ſay that I might prevail! And are you ſtill reſolved to put me off with frivolous excuſes? Can you put off your conſciences thus? Are you ſtill contented to be Aliens and Strangers? If you are, know this, that I muſt leave theſe lines to bear witneſs againſt you; Remember this, that you were told of theſe things again and again. Thoſe that can forget Sermons

here, shall remember them hereafter; if you be not the better for this discourse, you will curse the day that ever you heard it; it will be a cutting reflection, when another day you shall say to your own Soul, at such a time, such a one did beseech me in Christs stead to be reconciled to God, and I would not: Cursed man that I was! I made nothing of all the offers of Grace and Mercy, I made little account of these intollerable Torments which now make me to gnash my teeth. Hear, O unhappy Creature that art yet alive, be not yet past hope? O that thou mayest see thy sad state before it be quite past remedy! O let me take up a Lamentation for thee, as one whose condition is beyond expression deplorable! O that I could speak as affectionately to you as one did lately, who spent his strength and life amongst you all, *viz.* That I can neither eat nor drink, nor sleep quietly, whilest I think of the danger that precious Souls run every moment, while they are unacquainted with God! O that mine eyes were waters, and my head a fountain of Tears, that I might weep day and night for poor Christless Creatures, that laugh and are as cheerful as if no danger were near them, whereas that dismall day approaches apace, wherein they must bid an everlasting farewell to all their pleasures, and lie down for ever under the scalding wrath of an angry God! O stand astonished O Heavens, and wonder O Earth! Heres a man that had rather be a beast then a man, a Devil then a Saint, that prefers Hell before Heaven, that loves Death and hates Life; Here's a man that makes nothing of going to Hell, Damnation is a thing that he jests with; 'tis but

damning

damning, he saith: But damning! Is that so light a thing, a thing to be laughed at? Well if that damning be nothing, never complain of it, when you feel it; If it be nothing, never groan nor bite your tongue, nor gnash your teeth for it; If Heaven, and your Soul, the favour of God, eternal happiness, be such small matters, never complain for the loss of them. Well then, belike you are pleased very well with your choice, and you do choose rather to enjoy the pleasures of sin, for a moment, then the pleasures of Holiness, which last for ever. There stands a sinner that hears all this, and frets and foameth at the hearing of it; it's a torture to his Soul to be within the sound of such Truths? Why, act like one in his wits: If the hearing of Hell and Damnation be so troublesome, what will the feeling of it be thinkest thou? But that I may, if possible, prevail, I shall leave a few serious questions with you, which I charge you in the presence of God seriously to consider of, and to give a wise answer to these following Questions.

Quest. 1. Are those things which you have heard true, or are they not? Doth not the Scriptures speak the same things which I do? Dare you say that the word of Truth is False? Do but open the Bible, dip where you will, what is that you read there? Is it not something that hath a tendency to what I have been teaching of? O that you would but give your selves the trouble of searching the Scriptures, to see whether these things are so. To what purpose do you think should we spend our breath? to what purpose should we follow you with such exhortations, if we had not some grounds for what

we say? If there be no such thing in the word of God, why then do you not say so? Why, do you not shew us it, if there be such a place that saith, there is no need of repentance, that mans condition is safe enough already, and that he may do well enough, though he be never reconciled to God? do you think that we take delight in vexing men and women? do you conceive that it pleaseth us to displease you, and to get your hatred? do you not believe that a great many of us, if it might consist with Gods honour, and your welfare, had not far rather be excused? Can any man imagine that so many thousands of Prophets, Apostles and Ministers in such distant ages, and in such distant places, should all agree in this, to impose a falsity upon the world? VVould any man be so mad as to invent such things as these, which are so contrary to mens dispositions, if he had not abundant warrant from God himself? is it possible that men should make such complaint, and shed so many tears, and be in such agonies about these things, if there were nothing at all in them? are all the experiences of so many thousands of Saints, but meer fancies? Speak Christian, speak, what do you say to this? are all thy joys, thy answers of Prayers, those sweet dishes that thou hast sometimes fed upon, but dreams? Doth not thy very blood stir in thee, at the very putting such a question to thee? Canst thou not say that thou hast seen, that thou hast felt and that thou hast known undoubtedly, that Spiritual things are realities, the greatest realities in the world, and that thou hast been as much affected with them as ever thou wert with the things of sense? Let me, the meanest

meaneſt of ten thouſand, tell the ſtifſeſt Atheiſt in the world, that I have ſeen theſe things ſo realized, that I ſhall ſooner believe that I am turned to a ſtone, or am dead, then believe that Spirituals are nullities and fancies. I am confident if there be any credit to be given to both eyes, and ears, then theſe things are true; and had you ſeen but what I have ſeen in dying Saints, and heard what I have heard, you would eaſily have been convinced that there is ſomething in communion with God, ſomething in Spiritual joys. I am ſure, if there be any truth in the Scriptures, if the word of God be true, if Chriſt and the Apoſtles were not all miſtaken, then theſe things are true. If I ſhould tell you a buſineſs that did concern your Houſe, or your Children, or Body, or any worldly thing whatever, upon my own perſonal knowledg, would you not readily aſſent to what I ſay? I am perſwaded you would be far from ſuſpecting the truth of what I affirmed; I am ready to think that there is none of you all that think that I dare tell you that which is falſe. O then, why will you not believe me in a buſineſs of far greater conſequence? And if you ask me to what purpoſe do I ſpend ſo much time for nothing? what need I ſpeak at this rate? What will I make Infidels of you all? what do I think that you are ſuch Atheiſts as not to believe that the word of God is true? Well then, you your ſelves are witneſſes that the word of God is true, and that you do believe all that is contained in it, and by rational inferences deduced from it: I ſhall therefore take it for granted that you give your aſſent to theſe things, if you be Chriſtians in profeſſion, your very Name ſpeaks as

much. Now my next queſtion ſhall be this.

Queſt. 2. Are theſe things of weight and importance, or are they not? You hear that they are matters that concern your eternal life or death, Soul affaires; and are not theſe matters of the greateſt conſequence? If acquaintance with God, the happineſs or miſery of a Soul, your making or undoing for ever, be inconſiderable things, what then are great things? Is it a matter of greater importance, to looſe the ſight of a laſcivious Play? Is it an affair of greater weight to have the frowns of a wanton miſtreſs, or the frown of a God? You ſaid even now, that the word of God was true, if you will ſtand to that, I deſire no more; how is it written? Read a verſe or two, turn to Matthew 5. 20. *Except your righteouſneſs exceed the righteouſneſs of the Scribes and Phariſees, ye ſhall in no caſe enter into the Kingdom of Heaven:* And John. 3. 3. *Except a man be born again, he cannot ſee the Kingdom of God.* And God will poure his wrath upon the Heathen, and upon the Families that call not upon his Name. Doth not the Scripture ſay, that is the one thing neceſſary? Are not theſe things called by the Lord Chriſt, the weightier things? *Mat.* 23. 23. I hope you will not ſay, that God is miſtaken, and that the Scripture ſpeaks more of theſe matters then needs: what are you gon from your word ſo ſoon, did you not ſay that the word of God was true, and are you now of another mind, becauſe you find that it requires more ſtrictneſs, you are willing to ſubmit to? But are you aſhamed of that, and are you convinced of this alſo, that the doctrin of recon-

Reconciliation, Acquaintance, and Peace with God, are affairs of the highest importance in the world? And do you indeed believe this? and will you stand to it? well then, my next Question shall be this:

Quest. 3. What do you mean then to mind such things as you acknowledge to be most unquestionably true, and of the greatest consequence, with so much indifferency and coldness? what reason have you then for your strange neglect in your prosecuting of them? what, say they are the greatest things in the world, and will you say they are least to be looked after? Is it any Prudence and Wisdom to be very serious about trifles, and to trifle about the most serious things? Are Heaven, the love of God, and the like, by your own confession the most weighty, and will you make light of them? O folly and hypocrisie! *Out of thy own mouth thou shalt be condemned.* Dost know that Heaven and Hell are before you? dost thou know that the one is unspeakably glorious, and the other unspeakably dreadful? and yet for all this dost thou stand demurring which of these thou shouldest choose? and darest thou for all this venture on in a way which leads to the region of Eternal Darkness? and though those that know the way better then you, and see you ride on so hastily and mercily, call after you with earnestness, yet dost thou still turn thy back upon them? Consider whether you act in these affairs, like one that is well in his wits. Is God the best friend in the world, and yet his kindness least to be regarded? Man, what hast thou to say for thy self? O What bruits, and how irrational are men in their spiritual matters! how

do they contradict themselves? how do they say one thing, and do the quite contrary? O let me in a word or two renew my Expostulation with them which are loath to be accounted fools! What reason hast thou to undervalue the favour of God so as you do? what reason have you thus foolishly to cast away your selves, and to slight acquaintance with your maker? Let me plead with you in the language of a Reverend Divine (*R. B.*) of our own. Look up your best and strongest Reasons; and if you see a man put his hand into the fire till it burn off, you'l marvel at it: but this is a thing that a man may have reason for, as Bishop *Cranmer* had when he burnt off his hand for subscribing to Popery. If you see a man cut off a Leg or an Arm, it's a sad sight; but this is a thing that a man may have good reason for, as many a man doth to save his life. If you see a man give his body to be burnt to ashes, and to be tormented with Strappado's and Racks, and refuse deliverance when it is offered: this is a hard case to flesh and blood: but this a man may have good reason for, as you see in *Heb.* 11. 33, 34, 35, 36. and as many an hundred Martyrs have done. But for a man to forsake the Lord that made him, for a man to run into the fire of Hell when he is told of it, and intreated to turn that he might be saved: this is a thing that can have no reason in it, that is reason indeed, to justifie or excuse it. For Heaven will pay for the loss of any thing that we can lose to get it, or for any labour that we bestow for it; but nothing can pay for the loss of Heaven. Read on in Mr. *R. B's. Call to the Unconverted*, pag. 169. Do you still believe the Word of God

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to be true, and the things contained in it to be the moſt weighty, and yet will you ſtill paſs them over, as if there were nothing at all in them?

Queſt. 4. My next Queſtion that I ſhall propound to you, and deſire your ſerious and ſpeedy anſwer to, is this; Do you believe that you can find a better friend then God? can you mend your ſelf any where elſe? is there in Heaven or Earth any that can do as much for you as God can? is there any one that can take you off when you come to be accuſed for High Treaſon againſt the King of Heaven, and to be arraigned before that juſt Judge? have you got that which will quit your coſt in getting of it, and countervail the loſs of a ſoul? what is it that ſtill hath an intereſt in your heart, that is thought to be an equal competitor with God for your deareſt love? If it be indeed that which will ſhield you from the arreſts of Death, and the wrath of the Almighty; if it be that which can ſhelter you from the ſtorm of his diſpleaſure; if it be that which will do you as much good as Heaven, and make you as happy as God can; why then I have little to ſay; make your beſt of it. But conſider well what you do firſt, be ſure that you be not miſtaken, have not many thought as you think, and have found their miſtake when it was too late?

Queſt. 5. Do you think that this world will laſt always with you? do you not believe that ere long you muſt die, and your ſoul appear before God, and by him be ſentenced to its everlaſting ſtate? where is all the glory of thoſe great Monarchs which deſpiſed God, and oppreſſed his people? what is become of all their pomp? which

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of them that flourished three thousand years ago stand alive now in glory? and are you better then they? shall the worms which have made a prey of them, spare you? is Death more favourable now a days, then he was before? is not the world still as it was, but vanity? is not all flesh still but grass, and the beauty of it as a flower that is cut down and withereth suddenly? Well then, this being granted, that nothing is more certain then Death, and that it is appointed for all men once to die; would you not then be glad of something that will stand you instead after death, a Friend in another world? why then do you not speedily get acquainted with him who alone can befriend you in that dreadful hour?

Quest. 6. What do you think will become of you, if after all this you go on in your old ways? what will become of you do you think if you should die without the knowledge of God? what hopes have you of life and peace, if you bid defiance to the Lord of life, and contemn the Prince of peace? how shall you escape if you neglect so great salvation? what do you think that those which did once as you do now, slight Christ, and never look after Reconciliation with God, are now a doing in another world? what would you do in this case? should one come to you either out of Heaven, or out of Hell, how wonderfully do you think you should be affected with the Narration which they would give you of the affairs of the invisible world? why then will you not now be affected with what we say? for assure your selves, whatever you may think, our testimony is as true, and hath a better foundation of credit, then if one should tell you he came

came from the dead, and speak to you of these things.

Quest. 7. Another Question I would propound to you, is this; Are you willing to bear the displeasure of God? can you undergo the weight of that wrath which made his back to ake, who was mighty to do and suffer? can you with any patience hear that dreadful word pronounced by the mouth of that Judge, which will see to the execution of his Sentence, *Depart from me ye cursed into everlasting torment; Depart from me ye workers of iniquity, for I know you not?* Can you endure without any trouble that scalding hot wrath, which is abundantly more painful then Fire and Brimstone, more intollerable then to be shut up in a burning fiery Furnace, or to be boyled in a Caldron of melted Lead, or whatsoever torments the wit of Men or Devils can invent? Can you with any patience bear the Stone, Gout, Tooth-ach, Chollick, or some such distempers of body which last but for a while? O how long do you think the time when you are in that condition? how do you toss and tumble? what lamentable moan do you make? do not you think you can't be too much pitied in that condition? how then will you be able to lie down in those torments, the least drop of which is abundantly more painful then the greatest torment that ever you felt in your life? If these seem dreadful to you, why do you not go the way to avoid them? which is by getting an interest in him who hath the Keys of Hell at his girdle; for there is no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, to them that are brought into a state of Reconciliation and Acquaintance with God by his Son our Mediatour.

Quest.

Quest. 8. Are you contented to lose everlasting happiness? Can you willingly see *Abraham*, and *Isaac*, and *Jacob*, and a great many from all the quarters of the world, to sit down in the Kingdom of Heaven, and your selves cast out? how do you like to have those which you scorned to look upon, to be set at the Table at the Feast, and your self shut out with the Dogs? would you not be glad to have a word of comfort spoke to you, when your soul is just a taking its leave of your body? would you not be glad then to be conveyed by the blessed Angels into the presence of God, and to be crowned with an immortal and glorious Crown? would it do you any harm to be perfect in holiness and happiness when you die? would you not be glad to be saved when others shall be damned? In a word, do you not desire to be rejoycing and praising of God in endless pleasures, when others shall be weeping and cursing of God in endless torments? why then do not you live the lives of the righteous, if you would die their deaths, and have your latter end like theirs? if you would be glorious and happy for ever, why do you not endeavour to be holy and spiritual in time? if you would have God your friend in another world, what do you mean that you labour no more to be acquainted with him in this world?

Quest. 9. How would you take it at any mans hands, to be served as you serve God? Suppose you should take up a poor Child that came to your door to beg, that had scarce a rag to cover his nakedness, not a morsel of bread to put into his mouth, and no where to hide his head? Suppose you should strip this poor begger of his rags,

and cloath him in very good apparel, and take him into your own house, and take as much care of him, as if he were your own child: Suppose after this you should bid him do you some small piece of service, and he in stead of it should say, *Command your man, and do your work your self*; and in stead of answering your kindness, should offer you the greatest abuse in the world, and afterwards conspire with a company of Rogues to rob and murder you; how would you like this? should you think that such a fellow as this did not deserve a halter rather then your favour? But now, if after this you should send after this ungrateful wretch, and tell him, that you are willing to forget all that is past, and to receive him into the greatest favour, and never to cast his former wickedness in his teeth; how would you take it at his hands, if he should stand I know not how long disputing whether he should accept of your kindness or no, whether he should choose the Gaol and Gallows, or your House? but if after all this you should send messenger after messenger, and offer to give him all that you have in the World, and to bestow your only Daughter upon him, and to settle presently a great Estate upon him with her; how would you take it if this vile ungrateful beggar should put you off a great while together with some poor excuse or other? how would you like it if he should make light of all your offers, and tell you he thanks you for nothing, and should undervalue your kindness? Would you not soon resolve not to trouble your self any longer with such an unthankful monster? would you not let him take his course, and not much pity him, if he afterwards see the dif-

ference between a Fathers house and a Gaol, between Liberty and a Prison, between Riches, Glory and Pleasure, and Poverty, Dishonour and Sorrows? would you not bid him never expect kindness more at your hands; but seeing he would not be ruled, to take what follows? What do you say, would you not do thus? I am perswaded you would. But should I unriddle this Parable, who do you think would be condemned? your own mouth would accuse you, and you would be your own Judge. Thou art that man that hast dealt thus disingenuously with God; thou art that begger to whom the Lord hath shewed much kindness, and offered more; he hath sent messenger after messenger, and at last he hath sent his Son to invite thee to his own house, and he offers to make you as happy as Heaven, Glory and Happiness it self can make you, and you stand still demurring, and add one delay to another, and are far from that grateful and speedy compliance which the nature of the thing doth require; and in stead of coming at Gods call, and a thankful owning of his marvellous kindness, how basely dost thou prefer thy company, thy lust before him, and offer the most intollerable affronts to his Majesty, and make nothing of his unparalell'd goodness, and continuest in open rebellion against him? What then hast thou to say for thy self, why God should not with a just abhorrency cast thee off for ever? But now that God should still offer thee as high as ever, and (in stead of doing as I have said, and as you your self would have done in case of a less contempt) still follow you with such a gracious propolal as this is, that I now make unto you,

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is it not a miracle of mercy, a prodigy of kindneſs?

Queſt. 10. And now what will you do? Will you ſtill for all this go on in your contempt of God? Will you ſtill refuſe to know him, and never mind acquaintance with him? Will you ſtill be indifferent whether you have God for your Friend, or your enemy? Now you have been tendred ſuch a match, will you make another choice, will you beſtow your heart ſomewhere elſe? And when have you don that, dare you ſtand to your choice, and ſay, that you have don very wiſely in refuſing God, and in imbracing this preſent world? Will you maintain it at the day of judgement, that you have don well to refuſe acquaintance with himſelf, and to run the hazard of his diſpleaſure? But you will not, you ſay, trouble your head with ſuch melancholly fancies as theſe are; they are enough to put a man beſides his wits; you hope to do as well as others, and ſo long you care not. VVell then, it ſeems you are reſolved; though, let me tell you, if you are contented to fare as moſt ſhall fare at laſt, you muſt be contented to be damned; for the Scripture is exceeding clear in this, that the number of thoſe that go to Heaven is a very ſmall number; and if you will not take my word for it, (for indeed I would not that you ſhould take my word, nor any mans breathing without warrant from Gods word, in things of ſo high a nature) look into the Scripture, and at your leizure, ponder a while upon theſe following Texts, *Luke* 13. 23, 24. *Then ſaid one unto him, Lord, are there few that ſhall be ſaved? And he ſaid unto them, Strive to enter in at the ſtrait gate: for many,*

many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able, Mat. 20. 16. *Many are called, but few are chosen.* And *Luke* 12. 32. Christ saith, his flock is a little flock. And the Church complains of the fewness of her number in this Language. *Mic.* 7. 1. *Woe is me, for I am as when they have gathered the Summer-fruits.* I might heap up abundance of Scriptures of the same nature, all which speak this to us; that it is not so common a thing to go to Heaven as most people reckon upon. But yet if thou be resolved, come what will come, not to change your mind; if after so many warnings, and pleadings, you still continue of this judgement; I must speak a dreadful word. Your blood be upon your own Soul. I have blown the Trumpet, I have don what in me lies to convince thee of thy dangerous state, while thou art a stranger to God, and to bring thee to a speedy acquaintance with him; but thou hast after many and many a tender given in this answer, that as for God, thou dost not desire to be acquainted with him; as for your matching with his Son, it's that which thou carest not for hearing of, except thou mightest have his estate without his Soveraignty; thou wilt not have him for thy husband, except he will let thee do as thou list, and run a whoring from him when thou pleasest: Thou wilt not have Heaven, except thou mayst have it without holiness; and as for the invitations of God, thou still makest light of them, neither promises nor threatnings signifie much with you. Well then, when you find by wofull experience what you have don, know whom you must lay all the blame on. I call Heaven and Earth to record, and you your selves are witnesses,

neſſes, that I have with all the pity and earneſt-neſs that I could for my ſoul told you of theſe great things: but you think the flattering offers that the Devil makes to be more advantagious then thoſe which God makes, and his ſervice to be preferred before the ſervice of Chriſt, and the friendſhip of the world to be eſteemed before the friendſhip of God; and the pleaſures of ſin, which are but for a ſeaſon, you value before thoſe rivers of pleaſures which are at the right hand of God for evermore. Now, if you continue in this mind, blame not me if you miſcarry for ever; you muſt whether you will or no ſtand to your choice. Do not ſay but you were told of theſe things; this is not the firſt time by many, but it may be the laſt that you may ever hear for all that I know. Remember you were once well offered. Do you think that God will always bare with ſuch unworthy abuſes? ſhall Gods Juſtice never be righted? yes, yes, be not deceived, ſlighted kindneſſes will coſt dear at laſt. What have you yet to ſay for your ſelf? do you think that I mean you any hurt by all this? except you count Salvation a wrong, and kindneſs it ſelf an injury. But if all this will not do, go then and make the beſt thou canſt of all thy Friends; let us ſee how well, and how long they will entertain thee: ere a few days it may be, ſhall be at an end, we ſhall hear how you like your choice, when they ſhall turn you out of doors, and tell you plainly, they can do nothing for you, you muſt ſhift as well as you can, as for them, they can't provide for themſelves, much leſs for you. And then let's ſee who hath made the beſt choice, he that is acquainted with God, and choſen him

for his Friend, or he that hath taken the World for his Friend? Let's see who will do most for their friends, when a time of trial comes. When Heaven and Earth are all in a Flame, when the Trumpet is sounding, when the Judge and his Attendants, Christ and all his holy Angels, are coming, when the Prisons the Graves are opened, and the Prisoners are brought forth, then let's see who will have the chearfullest countenance, he that holdeth up his hand at the bar, or they that sit upon the bench with the Judge: for know you not that the Saints, the Friends of the Judge, shall sit with him when he judgeth the World? We shall know when the storm riseth whose house was best, that which was built upon the sand, or that which was built upon the rock. O that people were now of the same mind that they will be of at the day of Judgement! O that they would consider, that if they will not now be at leisure to think of these things, they shall be at leisure to repent of them hereafter. Do not talk of scorns, and reproaches, and suffering, what, do you think that Heaven will not make amends for all that? which is most to be feared, the scorns of God, or the scorns of men? which will do you most hurt, mans contempt, or Gods? where is the man that will be laughed out of a great estate? because a fool saith, that a Jewel is not worth the taking up, will you therefore never stoop to take it up? The truth of it is, if you intend to make any thing of your Profession, you must be willing to be counted a fool, and a mad man: but you must remember, it is by those that are so themselves. O be not affrighted from your duty by the talk of the rabble. If the

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thing be evil, let the vice of it scare you; but if it be good, let not the fear of them which are very incompetent Judges in such a case divert you from it. Do you think that such poor excuses will be taken at the day of Judgement? What do you intend to say to God then? Lord, I would have laboured to have known thee, I would have taken some care of my soul, and I would have taken some pains about the things of Eternity, but that I saw that almost every one that did with any seriousness look after such matters were scorned, laughed at, and persecuted. When I had got into the company of those that were godly, and I had half a mind to go with them to Heaven, then my friends fell a jeering of me, and ask'd me whether I meaned to be mad to undo my self to turn Puritane and Fanatick? Do you, I say, believe that such a plea will stop the mouth of the Judge, and keep him from pronouncing the sentence against you? will this hold the hands of Justice? will the thoughts of this quench or cool these dreadful Flames? Be better advised, O be better advised for your souls sake, and consider how such creatures will befool themselves. Who would upon such a trifle part with Heaven? that would be laughed out of Glory, and jeered into Hell? Is your mind yet altered? have you any thoughts or resolutions to look after your soul and acquaintance with God? Are there none of you all that ask by this time, what shall I do to be acquainted with God? are there none of you that begin to think that it is high time to look out for a friend in a time of need? Have I all this while been beating the air, and laboured in vain? shall I leave you all as I found you?

you? God forbid. Methinks I hear some poor souls crying out by this time, O that I had but such a Friend that would bring me acquainted with God! O that I had but a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ! O that I did but understand what it means to have Communion with the Father and the Son, through the Spirit! I see my self undone and lost for ever, except I have an interest in this Friend. O who will bring me to him? How shall I get acquainted with him? O that is a sweet language! That's a very good question, *What shall I do to be saved?* but do you speak in sober sadness? do you speak in jest or in earnest? If any one would give you advice and direction, would you follow it in spite of all the opposition of Hell? What do you say, will you labour to keep exactly to those Directions that shall be given? if you will, I do not question but that you and God will be acquainted before you die. But, O let not me take a great deal of pains, and all to little purpose, as to you; do not now serve me as the *Jews* did *Jeremiah*, come and ask Counsel of God, and take the Devils. But in hopes that some poor souls may in good earnest desire Directions with an intent to follow them, I shall give them as follows.

I. DIRECTION.

If you would be acquainted with God, labour to get a through sense of your great estrangement from him, and of the danger of such an estrangement. This is that which makes people so well contented with their condition, because they see no great evil nor danger in it. Men are ready to think

think very well of their condition, although they be enemies to God, and no Friends to Christ. Enemies to God! they ſcorn your words, though all this while they expreſs the greateſt contempt of him conceivable; though they regard neither his Commands, Threatnings, nor Promiſes, though they value the company of a drunkard, a whore, before the company of God; though they do all that they can againſt God, Love nothing that he loves, though they ſide with Gods greateſt enemies, yet they abhor to be thought to be any others then well-wiſhers to Chriſt, and the Friends and Servants of God; though they never come near God, yet they take it very ill if they be not reckoned amongſt his acquaintance, and ſpecial Friends. VVhere is the profeſſor almoſt living, that doth not count it a high piece of uncharitableneſs, if one do not Canonize them among the Saints, though they live more like bruites! How hainouſly do they take it, if any one do but queſtion their ſtate? They ignorant of God! They enemies to the Croſs of Chriſt, they blind! they unconverted! Who is that man which dare queſtion their condition? They hope to ſare as well as any preciſe Puritan of them all, they will hope to be ſaved, ſay what you will then, you ſhall never beat them out of their truſt in God. And though in Faithfulneſs to their Souls, we beg of them to make a more diligent inquiry into the ſtate of their Souls, becauſe we know that the heart is ſo deceitful, and we have very great cauſe to ſuſpect that they know not God; yet they will go on very cheerfully with this confidence, until Chriſt himſelf ſhew them their miſtake, and tell them plainly that he

knows them not, and that he never accounted them any of his Friends. But now did men but throughly understand their natural estrangement from God, were they but indeed sensible of the vilenes of their hearts, did they but take notice of the Rebellions and Treasons that are within, the case would be far otherwise with them then it is. O this, this is the reason why so many millions of professors miscarry everlastingly, and never come to desire the friendship of God, because they never believed that they were any otherwise then friends; they do not suspect themselves at all, but think that they are rich and encreased in goods, and have need of nothing, whereas the Lord knows, and Christians know too, that they are poor, and blind, and naked. But now, when men begin to be thorowly sensible of this enmity that is in their natures against God; when they see what mutinies and rebellions there are in them against their most gracious Lord and King; and when they are made to understand the consequences of this War, then how sensibly do they cry out, what shall they do? was there ever any poor wretched creatures in a worse condition then themselves? was ever any ones heart worse then theirs? are there any out of hell that are such Monsters of sin as they are? O what shall they do? they see the Fire kindled, and themselves hanging over everlasting burnings: now all the world for a Christ; they believe now that God and Man are not equals; that there is no contending with the Almighty: who can stand before his indignation? and when they see Gods Sword drawn, and the point of it set against their heart, when they behold the terrours of the

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Lord laying themſelves in array againſt them; and themſelves like to loſe all, then how welcome would the news of a party be? how glad would they be then to hear of a pardon? then down go their weapons; they will ſooner come before God with a Halter about their necks, than a Sword by their ſides; they will fight now with no other weapons but Tears and Prayers: as for their Armour, they break it in pieces, and lay it at the feet of their offended Prince; and O if they might but have any hopes of pardon, it would revive their hearts; if they might have but a look of kindneſs from God, it would be a greater comfort to them than all the whole world beſides could afford them. To whom can a skilful Phyſitian be more welcome, then to the ſick? Chriſt came to ſeek the loſt, and ſuch as theſe we are ſent to incourage: but till the ſoul comes to this paſs, a Chriſt is not valued at all by it: if ſinners be not made thus to underſtand themſelves, why, though we ſhould plead with never ſo much earneſtneſs with them, we do but beat the aire, all that we can ſay ſignifies very little. The man thinks his great work is don, though his hands have been all this while in his boſom; he is far onwards in his journey to Heaven, though he never ſet one ſtep out of his own doors; he hath an intereſt in God, and is very well acquainted with him, and hath an aſſured confidence of his condition, that he ſhall be happy, though he have not one dram of Grace. He is a good Churchman, he hath ſate at the Lords Table, and the like: But O how many are there which ſhall ſee, and know that it is more then poſſible, to come off before God, and to complement him much,

and to sit oft at his Table, and yet not to be any of his peculiar Friends, and speciall acquaintance; now if ever you would make any thing of Religion, and be made highly to prize Gods favour, and to be really acquainted with him; you must labour to understand your distance from him, and the unconceivable hazard that you run, while you are in a state of Separation from God; that there is but one step between you, and the state of the Damned; for what would become of you, if God should say to you, this night thy Soul shall be required of you. How easily can God in a moment stop your breath, and send your Soul and Body into that lake that burns for ever and ever? and is it not then time for you to look about you? O this ignorance of our selves, how doth it expose us? (*Ar. Epict. l. 1. c. 26.*) He was not a whit mistaken, who said, *That the not knowing of our selves, was one of the chiefest causes of our sin and misery, and that the consideration of the state of the soul, and the, through understanding it's depravedness, was the beginning of wisdom; for it's weakness being well known, a man will not afterwards trust it in the determination of the greatest things; but man will be desirous to consult that great Oracle, the will of his Maker; and finding his old guide is blind, and hath oft misled him, thereupon he is the readier to be acquainted with such a one, who may direct him in the way to true happiness.* If you would therefore be acquainted with God, you must get well acquainted with your selves; you will upon the knowledg of your self be afraid of your self. He was none of the weakest men who said, *That a true sense of folly is no small sign of some proficiency in wisdom.* Look into thy self, O man, search every corner, behold what abun-

dance

dance of Armour, there is in such and such a dark Celler; but is this Armour strong enough to incounter a God withall? Canst thou with these Figleaves defend thy self against the Arrows of the Almighty? behold what a condition thou art in, if thou stirrest a step further. Yield speedily, and throw down thine Arms, or you are a dead man. Do you know this? do you really believe this? Is it possible? What believe that your Treason is found out, and that you are within a little of execution, and yet not tremble, and yet not seek nor desire a pardon. When a man throughly understands how things stand between him & God, and how unable he is to carry on a War against him, he will speedily cast about, how he may conclude a peace upon any terms. As soon as *Benhadad* knew what a condition his Army was in, when he saw the Crowns of his thirty Kings shaken, and his Warlike Captains cut in pieces, or to tremble, and be like women; when instead of a mighty Army of gallant Warriors in martial order, behaving themselves bravely in the field; he saw their carkases upon heaps, their garments rouled in blood, the Shields of his mighty Ones cast away, and himself wofully deserted, how speedily doth he send away his Servants, with Roaps about their necks, to beg peace upon any Terms? When the Gibeonites heard what dangerous fighting it was against *Joshuah*, they were not long before they made means to make a Covenant with him. So the Soul, when it doth seriously consider what a sad condition it is in, while it continues in Rebellion against God; it's impossibility to stand it out long, and utter inability to conquer him: when it perceives the designs

ſigns of Satan, who firſt cauſed this difference between the Soul and God, and hath ſtill inſtigated and ſtirred it up to perſecute with all the violence that might be; I ſay, when the Soul ſees this before it is quite too late! O how doth it bewail it's condition, how doth it cry out, O wretched man that I am, who ſhall deliver me? O what will become of me, if I make war ſtill againſt God? And as for flying, whether ſhall fly from his preſence, and where ſhall I hide my ſelf out of his ſight? And how ſhall I look him in the face, whom I have thus deſperately and ungratefully oppoſed? Can ſuch a Traytor as I poſſibly expect any mercy; if the Lord ſhould look upon me, and not immediately caſt me into Hell, it would be a miracle of Patience. And thus the man that begins a little to underſtand himſelf, ſpeaks to himſelf; and after that, he with *Ephraim*, ſmites upon his thigh, and bemoans his condition exceedingly! O that he ſhould ever take up Arms againſt his gracious Prince? O what ſhall become of him? Well, I have heard that the God of Heaven is a merciful King, I will go and caſt my ſelf at his feet, if I periſh, I periſh. If I continue in this Rebellion, there is no hopes; if I fly there is no eſcaping; and if I yield, I can but periſh! O ſad, ſad is my condition, wo and alas, what ſhall I do in theſe dreadful perplexities: But, why do I ſtay here? the avenger of blood follows after me apace, well, I will go to my God, through Chriſt, and I have heard that this is the only way, and that there is not the leaſt hope in the world, any other way to get a pardon, to eſcape the wrath to come! O that the precious and merciſull Jeſus would pity me,

and

and ſtand my Friend now if ever! O that he would ſpeak a good word for me, *Have mercy upon me, Jeſus thou Son of* David, *have mercy upon me!* O make peace for me, by thy blood; if thou wilt, thou canſt do more with a words ſpeaking, then all the Saints and Angels in the world; if ever any poor Creature in the world had need of mercy, then have I. O mercy, mercy, mercy for thy bloods ſake! But becauſe I ſhall ſpeak to this under another direction, I ſhall be the briefer. Now when a man is at this paſs, he is in a fair way for peace; but now as long as a man is ignorant of all this, he is quite in another note, he will never buckle, and therefore he ſhall be broken. Therefore conſider well your condition, obſerve the actings of your own ſoul: if you be one of the Friends and Acquaintance of God, what means your breaking and hating of his Spiritual Laws? what's the reaſon, if you love God, that you can take no delight at all in his company, no pleaſure in his Sabbaths? if you are a Friend of God, how hap you come no oftner to his houſe, when he dwells ſo near you? Why do you knock no oftner at his door? why are you ſo rare in your viſits? is this your kindneſs? is this like a friend? how comes it to paſs that there are ſo many Arms found hid in your houſe? what are they all for? what is the meaning of all thoſe meetings that you give to Gods enemies? what do all thoſe whiſperings, plots, and projects ſignifie? is this friendſhip? can you mean any good by all this? what do you ſay of your condition? do you ever complain, and that feelingly of your enmity againſt God? did you ever obſerve what a deſperate wicked ſpirit you

have

have against your maker; and were you ever made sensible of the danger of such a state, and ashamed and grieved to the very soul that you should ever engage against so good a God? Why then I am confident you can't but cry out with all the strength and earnestness of your soul for a peace, you can t but desire to meet with your adversary quickly, while is in the way. But if you see nothing at all of the treachery and baseness that is in your heart, search, and search again, it's your ignorance and blindness, and not the goodness of your state, that makes you to know nothing by your self. What, are you better then *David*? he was so jealous of his own heart, that he dared not to trust to his own examination of it, but he desires the great Heart searcher to help him in this work. Are you more excellent then *Paul* after his Conversion? had he more reason to complain of himself then you have? O be at leisure to look within, and get *Davids* candle and lanthorn to go into those dark corners of your soul with it, and it may be you may see that within which may make your heart to ake, and your joynts to quiver, and your spirits to faint within you. *Paul* was sometimes as confident as you, he took no notice of the enmity that was within against God, though he was as full of it as an Asp is of Poyson; yet before he came acquainted with God the case was altered with him; he was of another mind when that light shined about him, and he cried out, *Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?* he now thinks it is *hard kicking against the pricks*, dangerous opposing of God, and persecuting of Christ in any of his members; and he desires nothing in the world

world so much as to be reconciled to God, and to have him for his Friend, whom before he fought against as an Enemy.

II. DIRECTION.

My next *Direction* to those which would be acquainted with God, shall be this: Get an humble heart, which is the consequent of the former. God will exalt none to this high honour of being his Friends, but such as have low thoughts of themselves. The humble are the persons that he will raise, these are they that he will converse most with, these are the great Favourites of Heaven which God doth delight to honour. *Psal.* 34.18. *The Lord is nigh to them which are of a broken heart, and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit.* God is nigh to them, (with Reverence be it spoken) God takes so much complacency in the company of such, that he can't endure to have them far from him, he must have them always nigh to him, always under his eye; as for these broken ones, he will to be sure not leave them long, nor go far from them, but will be ready at hand to set their bones, to bind up their wounds, to keep them from festering. It may be he may put them to much pain before he brings the cure to perfection, but it is to prevent future aches. He is a foolish cruel Chirurgeon, who for fear of putting his Patient to some pain, never searcheth the wound, but skins it over presently: and a wise man will not think him unmerciful that puts him to exquisite pain, so he make a through cure of it. Thus God doth by his Patients sometimes, when the nature of their distemper calls for it.

But

But however, he will be ſure not to be out of the way when they want him moſt. It's poſſible they may look upon themſelves as forgotten by God, they may not know their Phyſician when he is by them, and they may take their friend for an enemy, they may think God far off when he is near; but when their eyes are opened, and their diſtemper is pretty well worn off, they will with ſhame and thankfulneſs acknowledge their error; nay, they do from their ſouls confeſs that they do not deſerve the leaſt look of kindneſs from God, but to be counted ſtrangers and enemies; but God will let them know that he loves to act like himſelf, that is like a God of love, mercy, and goodneſs; and that they are the perſons that he hath ſet his heart upon; he will have them in his boſom, never leave them nor forſake them; and though theſe contrite ones many times look upon themſelves as loſt, yet God will ſave them, and they ſhall ſing a ſong of thankfulneſs amongſt his delivered ones. Again, the ſacrifices of God are a broken heart: *A broken and a contrite ſpirit, O God, thou wilt not diſpiſe, Pſal.* 51. 17. The proud ſinner he may bring his fatled Oxen, multitudes of Rams and Sheep, and his Rivers of Oyl, and yet all this while not be accepted: There is another kind of ſacrifice that would be ten thouſand times more acceptable to God. We read that ſacrifices have been deſpiſed, Prayers, long Prayers have been rejected; Sabbaths, New Moons, and Solemn Aſſemblies the Lord hath ſometimes abhorred; but we never read that he deſpiſed the ſacrifice of an humble heart, the Prayers of ſuch always have an anſwer one way or other; their poor performances,

mances, their chatterings, and mournings are ſweet melody, and powerful Rhetorick in Gods ear. Who are the men that have moſt of Gods company? who are they which he doth moſt frequently viſit? are they not ſuch as look upon themſelves as the chiefeſt of ſinners? Theſe are they which are wrapped up into the third Heaven. None have ſo much of Heaven upon Earth as thoſe that wonder that the earth doth not ſwallow them up, and that they are not in Hell. But, O ſaith the humble Soul, God is the high and mighty God, and infinite in his Holineſs and Juſtice; how then can ſuch a Creature as I ever expect that he ſhould ſo much as caſt his eye upon me? yes, ſweet ſoul, ſuch is the infinite condeſcention and goodneſs of God, that he will ſooner look upon thee then another. And if you can't credit my vvords, hear vvhat he ſpeaks himſelf, *Iſa.* 7. 15. *Thus ſaith the high and lofty one that inhabiteth Eternity, whoſe Name is Holy, I dwell in the high and holy place, with him alſo that is of a contrite and humble ſpirit, to revive the ſpirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of my contrite ones.* The thoughts of Gods Majeſty, Eternity, and Holineſs may, and vvith good reaſon too, avve that ſoul that hath lovv thoughts of it ſelf. Every ſinner hath cauſe enough to cry out vvith aſtoniſhment, Will God look upon ſuch a vile ſinful vvretch as I am? Wil he that is infinite in holineſs take any notice of me, except to ſhevv his diſpleaſure againſt me? What ſhal I do? ſure ſuch a creature as I can't vvithout a miracle have a ſmile from God. God may indeed look upon me in his wrath, and vex me in his ſore diſpleaſure. God may juſtly look me into Hell; but that he

ſhoul

should look upon me in kindness, or take any special notice of me in love, that would be a wonder indeed. What, God dwell with me! Yes, with thee, if thou hast but high thoughts of him, and low thoughts of thy self; the meaner thou thinkest of thy self, the greater worth he sees in thee. God will not only look upon thee, nor will he only knock at thy door, and call at your house, or give you a transitory visit, but he will come and dwell with thee. Now dwelling speaks a continued abode with one, and thus God will continue with the humble; never remove from them, for any considerable time, till eternity hath an end: till himself, and the Soul cease to be, which will be never. God will not be a stranger to humble Souls, but he will come to them, and bring that along with him, that shall make him, and them welcome too. God never comes to his Friends, but he brings good cheer along with him. When the Soul gives God the best entertainment, it is all at his cost, his bread, his fatlings, his wine, his oyl, his cordials, his rich dainties. Where God comes, he will keep a noble House, and there shall be mirth and rich cheer good store, *Isa.* 66. 1, 2. *Thus saith the Lord, Heaven is my throne, and Earth is my footstool: Where is that house ye will build me? And where is the place of my rest? For all these things hath my hand made, and all these things hath been, saith the Lord: but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor, and of a contrite Spirit, and trembleth at my word.* God seems to have low thoughts of Heaven it self in comparison of an humble Soul: This is the Pallace, where this great King will keep his Court; this is the place of his rest. God is not so much delighted,

lighted and pleased in any of his brave seats, as in this of an humble heart; here he dwelleth most commonly; this was the great purchase of his own Son; this was the Master-piece of his power and goodness; this was the project of infinite wisdom and counsel. *What shall I do to be saved?* Is a language that makes Hell in a rage, and heaven to rejoyce. God is never so well pleased as when he beholds the beauty of his own Grace shining in a poor lost self debasing Creature. The spouse is adorned with humility, when Christ gives her that visit, *Cant.* 1. 4. God hath far more kindness for one that lyes under a sense of his own vileness, that thinks himself unworthy to tread upon Gods Earth, or to breath in his Air, then for the most confident righteous Pharisee in the World. Such an humble Soul will be much in admiring of God, and will set a high price upon his kindness; a look, a smile, a visit! O how welcome are they to those poor trembling Ones! Wherefore God doth with frequency and love visit them; he knows that he can never be unwelcome to such, they will count it the highest honour, that the most high should come into them in their low condition. Wherefore if you desire to have any intimate acquaintance with God, labour to be more and more sensible of your own unworthiness, study your heart and nature well, and be more curious in the observance of the baseness and treachery of your own Soul; endeavour to have a mean thoughts of your self as Paul had, who did not dare to call himself the chiefest of sinners: Humble your selves before the Lord, and he will exalt you; he that is little in his own eye, is great in

Gods. When was it that *Jacob* met with God, but when he had been humbling of himself? as you may read at your leisure, *Gen.* 23. There is many a professor that holds out many a year in a course of external performances, and yet never knows what it is to have any intimate acquaintance or converse with God: whereas I am perswaded, if the business were thoughly examined, it would be found that they were never made deeply sensible of their undon state out of Christ; never understood the desperate depravedness of their hearts, and nature; that they never lay under any lively sense of their separation from, and enmity against God; and they were never brought off from their own righteousness, and saw themselves poor, beggarly, starved Creatures; and in this condition came to buy wine and milk without money, and without price. But this humility, it is an excellent Grace, it makes the Soul fit for the richest enjoyments of God, and to do God the greatest service. Were it possible that God should converse much with a proud man, he would make strange use of it, he would steal Gods Crown, and put it upon his own head; but God would not endure proud Angels near him, and can it be expected that he should take proud men in their places? The more any one grows in Grace, and acquaintance with God, the more he sees of his own unworthiness, the more he admires free Grace. Why, me Lord, how much Will be the language of those which most converse with God? And while they are thus admiring God, and laying themselves low, he comes nigh unto his Soul in a visible kindnesses; and thus in humility they are more acquainted with God,

and being more acquainted with God, they are made more humble, and the one increaseth the other. Thus the humble Soul is raised higher and higher, till he come to an eternal possession of God in the highest heavens. When an humble Saint lives as it were in Heaven upon Earth, he scarce thinks himself worthy to live upon the Earth. When any one speaks well of him, and admireth the grace of God in him, he looks upon himself as an unprofitable Servant, and he durst not assume the least glory to himself; not unto me, not unto me, but unto the Lord be the praise given. Who am I poor wretch? O did you but know what a heart I have, did you but see the workings of my thoughts, could you but tell how things are, indeed you would rather admire at Gods patience, then mans excellency. This he speaks, not that he is worse then others, but because he hath a more Spiritual sense of his state then others have. Neither doth he speak this in proud Policy, thinking to make others to have a better esteem of him for his humility; but he doth really feel the pressure of that filthiness of sin, which makes him thus to groan out these complaints. The reason why God doth converse most with the humble, is because they will be most thankful, and most fruitful, and make the wisest improvement of his favours. Wherefore, if you value the comfort of a Spiritual life, if you desire communion with God, if you would have a heaven upon Earth, endeavour to get an humble heart. To walk humbly, and to walk with God, go together.

III. DIRECTION.

If you would be acquainted with God, you must visit him often, be much at his house, knock at his door many times in a day, and resolve to continue knocking till he open; and if he do not come presently, wait for him; you would do as much for your Prince, and it may be to a meaner person. We can't expect to be acquainted with them that we will not come near. It is to no purpose for that man to speak of acquaintance with God, who never speaks to him, comes at him, or enquires after him. Neither will a slight visit or two in a transitory complemental manner serve the turn; a man may do this, and yet not be said to be acquainted with God. A stranger may come once to your house that was never there before, and never intends to come again; and I believe you will scarce write such a one down amongst your special friends and intimate acquaintance. So in Spirituals; for acquaintance and converse with God are no such slight things as the world commonly take them to be. If you would make anything of this great work of getting acquaintance with God, you must not rest in it, you must give God many solemn and set visits, and carry your self with all the observance and respect to him that you can for your life. This is that which keeps many thousands of strangers from the life of grace, and intimate acquaintance with God, because they know not what those more peculiar visits of God mean; they understand not what it is to draw nigh to God in secret; they come not to him with

with those more spiritual acts of Religion; they pray, it may be, in their families, and it may be that but seldom (but by the way, never let such pretend to the knowledge of God, who call not upon him in their Families) but what they do, is is but in a poor formal perfunctory manner between sleep an[illegible]ke; and will you call this acquaintance [illegible]? will you call this an act of Adoration a[illegible]l Worship? 'tis to bow down a while be[illegible], and to read or speak a few words, and then an end? their work is over, their task is done, and they are glad on't. But now such as these do not come into Gods chambers; they come to his house, as I may so say, but they regard not whether he be at home, whether they speak to God, and have an answer from God or no. They call indeed, but desire not much to be heard; they knock, but are not very careful to stay till the door be opened. But alas, alas, such as these can't tell what it is to enjoy communion with God. They have got, it may be, into some course of external performances, by by reason of the example of their Superiours, education, or by being under the sound of the Gospel, and from some force that natural conscience doth put upon them, which will not be content except something be done. But such as these may not be said to visit God in that manner that I would perswade them to, which would be acquainted with God; for all this they stand a great way off from God, and may be termed strangers and forraigners. How seldom are they upon their knees in secret? how rare a thing is it for them with *Isaac*, to go into the field to meditate? They visit their Farms, they visit their Flocks,

Flocks, they visit their Swine, they go often to visit their foolish drunken Companions, whilest God and Christ, their Bible, their Closet, their Hearts are forgotten, and seldom or never visited. And is this true kindness to ones self? is it any wisdom to slight such a Friend as God would be to us, and to make so much of such sorry Companions? O stupid and dull souls! O what do we mean so strangely to forget our selves! for what is like to get by it, think we, when we come and feed at his Table, and spend upon his cost? O if we do people think what they might enjoy, would they purposely set themselves to meet with God, and go to his house with a strong resolution, not to come away from him till they have seen him, or heard from him. Now the great Duties in which the soul may be said to visit God in, and in which God doth many times give out much of himself to the soul, are these:

1. Solemn Meditation.
2. Secret Prayer.
3. Fasting.
4. Community of Experiences, and Communion with the Saints.

1. *Meditation.* When the Soul doth fix it self upon the thoughts of some Spiritual and Divine object, such as the love of God in Christ, the glory of another World, &c. This is, as it were, going out to meet the Lord, and to take a walk with our Beloved; this is the getting up to mount *Pisgah* to take a survey of that goodly land. When the soul doth as it were, bathe it self in the Contemplation of Christs beauty, and labours to enamour it self more and more with his love; and to throw it self, as I may so say, into

that

that ocean of Divine goodnes; it will have leave till it be wound up to the highest pitch of admiration, of that infinite boundless love which should do such glorious things for so vile and contemptible, for so rebellious and unthankful wretch as that is. O what manner of love is this! O that I were sick of love! O that I might die sick of love! O that I were once in the embraces of my dearest Lord and Husband! O that I could do nothing else day and night but praise, love, and admire this infinite boundless love! And did Christ indeed offer up his life for my sin? Did he not think his precious heart bled too dear for me? and shall I think my heart love too dear for him? What, for me, Lord, which am the chiefest of sinners! Here, here's kindness with no witness. Stand still, O my soul, and admire, and looking upon this lovely sight till thou art all on fire. These are the pure flames, here thou needest not to fear to exceed; widen thy soul, let thy affections run without controul. More fire still, blow hard, it doth yet but smoak; O for some coals from the altar! O for more fire, more fire! O that my heart were vehemently inflamed in the strongest love to him, who still deserves a thousand times more! Help me all ye Angels to bless and adore his marvelous loving kindness. Christ is a friend to Publicans and Sinners indeed, or such a one as I had never been on this side of Hell. O love, love, love! What shall I render unto the Lord? O that men would bless the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men! O what meanest thou, O my soul, that thou art yet so cold? Awake, awake, Psaltery and Harp, I my self will

awake and praise, admire and love thee, O my God, whose love to my soul is beyond expression. And thus while the soul is musing, the Fire begins to burn; while the Spouse is thinking of her glorious Husband, he knocks at the door, she draws the latch, and he comes in smelling of Mirrhe, Aloes and Cassia; he comes and kisses the soul with the kisses of his lips, his love is better then wine; he comes and takes the soul into his arms. O the sweet pleasure of Divine Love, infinitely transcending all carnal affections! O the joy that is at this meeting, far surpassing humane apprehension! O the sweet entertainment that God and the Soul gives each other at such a time! I appeal to the experience of those that have been much exercised in this great Duty of *Meditation*, if they have been in good earnest in the work, I am confident they can say something to this point. What sayest thou, O Christian, which art used to imitate *Isaac*? didst thou never meet with another Rebecca's Companion then *Rebecca*? As he met with a Wife, so thou hast met with thy Husband: when thou hast been in the Field, or Closet, at this work, hath not Christ then taken you by the hand, and led you into his garden, and made you to taste of his pleasant fruits? hath he not brought you into his banqueting-house, and brought out some of his choicest dainties? are not those flaggons more full of Spirit, more cordial and refreshing then wine? O little do any but those who have tried it, think what a life they might lead, if they would with seriousness engage in this duty. Speak O ye gracious ones, that make conscience of this Soul-ravishing duty; speak I beseech you, and

do

do not smother the kindnesses of God to you; speak, and let him have the praise: It may be by your venturing your experience, hundreds may be encouraged to set upon the same work, and hundreds may also have the same experiences. What do you say? have you not found the benefit of this duty? did you never find *Meditation* a sweet work? was it worth your while or no, to retire your selves a while from the world to talk with your Beloved? did you ever repent you of your labour, and think your time lost? have you not been able to say that at such and such a time, when you were in the mount, that it was good being there? could you not have been almost content to have left the dearest relations, and to have quitted your interest in all creature-comfort, so you might have had fuller enjoyments of God; could you not have been contented to pass from Contemplation to Vision and Fruition? why, speak then for the Lords sake, and for the sake of precious souls, and keep not such a think as this is in; let your unexperienced neighbours know what a Soul-ravishing and Soul raising Duty *Meditation* is. Let me ask thee which readest these lines, did you ever trie what there was in this Duty of *Meditation*? I suppose, if you converse much with such Books as speak of Communion with God, you can't but desire something of it, and I am perswaded you have sometimes wept since you began to read this Book, out think how little you experience; I believe you would be glad with all your soul to know what it is to be acquainted with God, and to have such a Friend as I have been speaking of. Why let me ask you again, did you ever try

what

what *Meditation* is? (you may read much of the excellency of this Duty, and Directions about it in Mr. *Baxters Saints Everlasting Rest*) did you ever get out of the world, and intensely fix your heart and thoughts upon any of the glorious Attributes of God? did you ever set before your eyes his love in Christ? if not, O try and fall to this work seriously and speedily, and you shall soon find the sweetness of it; you will soon say that you lost many a good meeting, mainly a dainty bit for want of going for it. A carnal worldly heart, I must confess may possibly spoil this Duty, as all others, and grow formal in it, and be weary of it, and cast it off, (though let me put in this, I believe its marvelous rare for a Hypocrite to have any thing to do in such a secret duty as this is,) but if they were true to the interest of their own souls in the management of this work, I am confident they would be every day more and more in love with this duty: For I am perswaded that when the soul is in good earnest, nay, I can speak it positively, there is no duty doth so much raise and warm the soul; there is no duty wherein the people of God enjoy his sweet company more then in this. This opens the treasures of Gods kindness, this takes his Love-tokens and presents them to the view of the soul; this unlocks the Cabinets, and fetches out those precious Jewels: by this the soul doth, as it were, talk with its Beloved, and in this Christ doth as it were, take the soul by the hand, and lead it into his palace, and shews it all those glorious things which it shall shortly have in full possession for ever. And how can this choose but engage the soul to express its gratitude to the height

in

is answer to such love; and when the soul is in this frame, Christ will not be behind hand with her, no love shall be lost between them; if the Spouse walk out to look for her Beloved, she shall find him before she hath done.

2. Another duty by which the Soul doth visit God in a special manner, is *Secret Prayer*; by this the Soul knocks, and God is quick of hearing, and none of his Friends shall wait without doors so long as to catch cold. By this the Soul doth as it were storm Heaven, by this it gets into the presence chamber, and presents it's requests. In this duty, a Christian doth as it were turn the key of Heavens doors, and by this he unlocks the door of his own Soul; and so there is free access on both sides, the Soul visits God, and God visits the Soul, and this creates an intimacy. The poor wounded Creature opens his wounds, and then the great Physician comes with the Balm of *Gilead*. When *Jacob* is thus weeping and praying alone, he meets with God, he meets a blessing, he wrestles, he conquers. This duty of *Secret Prayer*, and that other of *Meditation* are two fatning duties, by which the Souls of believers come to Gods Table, and eat, and drink of strengthening food; and for want of these, many poor Souls are thin. O why do Christians, why do professors maintain no fairer correspondency with God in such duties wherein he doth manifest himself more then ordinarily to the Soul? The reason of this may be because God accounts himself more highly honoured, and more truly loved by them which act much in these, then by others. By this a man doth as it were honour the goodness of God, in that it shows it worth the while to steal

out of the world, and to leave the best company on earth to go to God: He honours the truth of God, by being earnest for what God hath promised though it be unseen; he honours the Omniscience of God, by contenting himself with his eye and his ear alone; he sanctifies his Omnipresence, by believing that his God can hear him and be with him in what corner soever he creeps into. I might be large in speaking of the excellencies of this duty, but I refer it rather to another place. But I would not be mistaken in what I have delivered, as if I would by this exclude family prayer, no, far be it from me; for God in these doth many times exceedingly refresh his. But because a man can't possibly judg so well of himself by publick prayer, as he can by secret: and hypocrisie and pride, do not usually so much attend secret duty, as more publick. It's possible in more publick duty that a man may be much raised and be very warm and high in his expressions, and almost ravish the hearts of his hearers, whereas he may be all that while acted only by a proud heart, and for all that I know the Devil himself may help a man thus to pray sometimes. This I am confident of, he is not afraid of such prayers as these, which tends so much to the hardening of a sinner, and makes him believe that his heart is warmed with communion with God, whenas it is possible it is nothing but a secret self-pleasing that those that joyned with him might think very highly of him, as one that was passing spiritual in his performances. O the heart of man is deep, and desperately full of deceit! But now, there is none of this temptation in secret closet-prayer, and there a soul may be more particular

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in its complaints and petitions, more earnest in pleading with God, and may use such expostulations, postures and gestures, such intermissions, and groanings, such pauses as would be very unfit for more publike duty. Wherefore I lay somewhat the more stress upon this duty of *Secret Prayer*. But this I say again, where one of them is practiced conscientiously, the other will not be neglected. I might add the practice and experience of Gods Children to inforce this duty. *David* would never have been at it so oft, at midnight, if he had got nothing at all by it. *Peter* would scarce have forgot to eat, when he was an hungred, except he had met with a bit in a Corner to stay his stomach.

3. *Fasting*, especially priyate *fasting*, is another duty, wherein God meets the Soul, and the Soul visits God. This is as it were execution day, the day when the soul brings out all the enemies of God to be crucified; this is the day wherein the Idols are searched for, brought out, and buryed or ground to powder, and these are things which God will come to see with much delight. By this the soul is as it were adorned, her deformities done away, and she is trimmed up to meet her Beloved. When a Saint fasts from sin, and abstains from sensual pleasures, then it is many times feasted by God, and refreshed with spiritual enjoyments.

4. Another season wherein God meets the soul, and the soul is visited by God, is, when Christians are met together to communicate experiences, or to discourse together about the great things of God. What, though most of the world are ashamed to own Religion when it is out of fashion?

shion? what though but few dare meet together to speak of Gods goodness, and to praise him, and call upon his Name? why, Christ says, Though there be but two or three of them, he will make the number one the more, *he will be in the midst of them*: And though they dare but whisper, it may be, and their meetings to serve God, and do good to one another, may be prohibited by the publick Magistrate, and consequently what they do in this kind must be don with a great deal of hazard, yet the people of God stand not long disputing, they know what to do in this case; yet they would be wise in it too: not to dare the Magistrate, and to do what they do to confront authority, but in the uprightness of their souls they desire to meet together to worship God according to his own will. Yet for all this, though they manage their business with never so much secresie, God will take notice of them, he hearkens and hears, and a book of remembrance is written for them that call on upon his name, and God will make them up among his Jewels. But I shall have occasion to speak of something to this purpose afterwards, and therefore I pass it over the more briefly.

IIII. DIRECTION.

If you would get acquainted with God, get Christ along with you, when you go to God. You are like to speed no way so soon as this way: nay, let me say, all that I have said before signifies nothing at all without this. There is no Name under Heaven, by which we can be saved, but by the Name of Christ; and whosoever comes

comes to the Father by him, he will in no wise cast out. God can't deny his own Son any thing, he can never forget that great undertaking of his, by which he glorified his Fathers infinite Justice, and infinite love, and did him more honour then all the Saints and Angels in the World. His Son, the Lord Christ, hath such an interest in his Father, that he can as soon despise his own honour as to refuse any request that is presented to him, by his Son. If Christ come to him, and say, Father, here is a poor sinner that I have undertaken for, and that flew to me for refuge, Look upon him for my sake; why the Fathers Arms are presently open; he will not reject his Sons Petitions. The truth of it is, this is the greatest cause of the miscarriage of poor Creatures, that go about to do that themselves, and by themselves, which they can never do alone. They go to God all alone, and no wonder then they meet with a frown; for there is no Name under Heaven, by which a man can be saved, but by the name of Christ; and out of Christ, God is a consuming Fire; and there is but one *Mediator* the man Christ Jesus. And there is but one advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. That which *Joseph* said of *Benjamin*, God saith of Christ, except you bring *Benjamin* along with you, you shall not see my Face, except you bring Christ along with you, you shall not see my Face. There is a notable story which is commonly by Divines applyed to our present purpose, and that not without good reason; it is concerning a Law among the *Molossians*, whereby whosoever came to the King with his Son in his Arms should be accepted into favour, let his fault be what it will.

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So let a man be what he will before, yet if he come to God in Christ he can't be thrust away. O therefore if thou wouldest have any countenance from God, beg for a Christ to bear thee company into the presence of God. I will tell you this for your comfort, Christ hath a loving design in his heart to do such offices of kindness for poor Malefactors that understand something of their danger. If you see your self lost for want of reconciliation with God; Christ he stands ready to lead you into his Fathers house. O did you but know how willing he is to bring undone lost penitents to God, it would make your heart leap within you for joy. Behold, how oft he asks after you; what doth that sinner mean to ruine himself? I would with all my heart bring him out of all those perplexities, and undertake to make God and him Friends, if he would be but ruled by me; and upon this account he sends up and down many hundreds of his Ministers to tell sinners as much, that they may not be undone everlastingly. Doth not Wisdom call? doth not Christ plead the Case, and expostulate with sinners? and who would not, that hath any understanding at all of his state out of Christ, with all possible thankfulness be encouraged to accept of his kindness? Christ hath done as much as this comes to already for many millions, and his Father never said to him, Son, why do you trouble your self and me with so many of these vvretched Creatures, let them alone to take their course. Where did God ever express himself in this manner? did he ever take it unkindly that his Son should every day bring such guests to his house, and be continually

mually begging one boon or other for them, or putting up some Petitions upon their account, or pleading with his Father for them when they do offend. Is God displeased at such work as this? is he not as willing to receive such, as his Son is to bring them? and both Father and Son more willing to save the sinner then he is to be saved? O kindness! Christ loves the sinner better then he loves himself: and as I said before, so I say again, the Father doth not grutch any thing that Christ gives or doth for poor sinners. The Righteousness of Christ, it is that wedding garment, in which we may sit at the Kings Table, and are welcome; these are the Robes of our elder Brother, in which we can't miss of our Fathers blessing. O how many poor Creatures have walked in the dark many years, because they have not been brought off from themselves, but have sought that by themselves, which is to be sought only by Christ; because they have looked for that in the Law, which is to be found only in the Gospel; and no wonder their business went on so slowly, when they went the quite contrary way to work. When any comes to God without Christ, they come like Simon Magus, with their own money in their hand to buy a great Commodity, which is not to be purchased with such kind of coin. If you come to God through Christ, you may come with boldness to the Throne of Grace; but if you come without him, you do but come with madness upon the point of the flaming Sword.

V. DIRECTION.

If you would be acquainted with God, come much where he is wont to be, frequent his house, lye always at the doors of Wisdom, engage much in his Ordinances. This was that course that *David* took when he wanted Gods company, away he goes to the house of God; and, O what earnestness doth he use when the doors of the Lords Tabernacle were shut, to get them open again? what moan doth he make when he was for some time sequestred by his enemies, from the enjoyment of God in his publick Ordinances? *As the Hart pants after the water brooks, so did his soul pant after God, the living God.* O, when should he appear before him? when should he again behold the outgoings of God in his Sanctuary, as sometimes he had? *How amiable are thy Tabernacles,* saith he, *O Lord God of Hosts! And one thing have I desired, and that will I seek after, that I may dwell in thy house, and see thee, and enquire in thy tabernacle,* Psal. 42. Psal. 84. Psal. 27. 4. He thought God was like to be found no where so soon as at his own house; he was sure he was never from home. *David* can never forget what usage and entertainment he was wont to have there, and that this great Friend was used to have a standing table, an open house, and that when his guests were set, he would come and bid them welcome: eat O friends, drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved. See therefore that you get into that part of Gods house where he doth most frequently come, get under the most powerful Ministry: O hear the Word with all the Reverence, Attention,

and

and Affection that you can for your soul; miss not any opportunities that God puts into your hand, least that should be the time in which you might have met with God: Lye at the pool of *Bethesda*, and wait for the moving of the waters; set your self as in the house of God, and remember, though you see not God, that he is always present in all places, but he is there more especially present where his people meet together to attend upon him in his own Ordinances? Wherefore when you come to hear the Word, set your self as in the presence of God, and hear as for your life and soul, *Deut.* 32. 46. *Set your hearts to all the words that you shall hear; for it is not a vain thing, it is your life.* Isa. 55. 2, 3. *Hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight it self in fatness. Incline your ear, and come unto me; hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David.* He that hath ears to hear, let him hear what the mighty *Jehovah* is speaking to his soul. Wherefore I say it again, set your self as in the very immediate presence of God; and when you hear a word that you are very nearly concerned in, put up such a short Ejaculation as this. Now Lord, strike this hard heart of mine; now Lord come in I beseech thee; O that this word might be the key which might open my heart for the King of Glory to come in! O command thy loving kindness this day to break into my soul! O that this might be the day in which Salvation might come unto my house? O that this might be the man that might be my Spiritual Father; that this might be the messenger sent amongst this stupid sort that may bring me

good tidings! O that this might be the sentence; that this might be the hour of Love! O that this might be the day that I may have in everlasting remembrance! O that I might presently without any more delay set out for *Canaan*! Cry out with as much earnestness as that poor man did, who brought his possessed child before Christ; O Lord I have brought my unbelieving heart before thee to cure, it exposes me a thousand times to unspeakable hazards; but Lord, if thou wilt but speak the word, it shall be dispossessed: I would believe, Lord help my unbelief. I have brought my hard heart before thee, Lord soften it, and let me not go from time to time with these dreadful diseases hanging about me, to infect and undo myself and others. O melt me, O Lord, melt me, and let me have such a look from thee, as *Peter* once had, which made him to go out and weep bitterly. But I shall speak a little more of this nature under another Direction.

VI. DIRECTION.

If you would be acquainted with God, you must get acquainted with some of his Friends, and they will do all they can, and be glad of it too, to help you to be acquainted with him, they will not spare to give you their utmost assistance in this great business. And when they shall hear you asking, what you shall do to know God, they are glad at their heart, and will not be at quiet till they have got them home with them to their Fathers house; they watch for your Soul, and no greater joy then to help forward this work as this, then to be imployed any way in

service of your Souls. They are glad when they hear any saying, let us go to the house of the Lord, and asking the way to *Zion*, with their faces thither-ward. O! Christian society, good company is of exceeding use; one good servant in a house, the whole Family may fare the better for him. *Laban* and *Potiphar*, though ignorant enough in Spirituals, could not but observe this, that the Lord blessed their Families, for the sake of one godly Servant. I do not speak this only with respect to temporals, because of that diligence and Faithfulness in their places, that Religion will put them upon; but with respect to Spirituals, they will be dropping something that may tend to the awakening, and convincing of their sleepy, unbelieving, ignorant companions: they have an inward principle which puts them upon communicating what Grace they have received; they know the more they impart to others, the more they shall have themselves; they have a compassion for Souls, and would fain have as many as they can along with them to Heaven; they will be teaching little children to Pray, and instilling something that the very Babes may set forth Gods Praises, and they will be pleading with God for them. But this only by the by. Now if those that are gracious endeavour what they can to bring in those that are open enemies; how much more will they be ready to give all the help they can to you that earnestly desire it? Now when any one comes to this pass, that he sees a difference between the godly and the wicked, and to say that the righteous is more excellent then his neigbour, and to have an earnest desire to associate themselves with them, it

is a very great sign that God hath an intention to do such a Soul good. Wherefore if you would be brought to the knowledg of God, go speedily to them that know him well, and they will tell you great things of him, and how they came first acquainted with him, and how this acquaintance hath been kept up; they will tell you where they first met him, they will give you to understand that at such and such a time, when they little thought of God, they were strangely brought acquainted with him. When they came (out of fashion, or curiosity, or to laugh at him that taught them, or it may be to pick some quarrel with him) to hear such a man; they were made to see what they never took any great notice of before, that they were in an undon condition by nature, and that except Christ would pitty them, there was no remedy, but to Hell they must go; whereas before they thought themselves as safe as could be: But then they saw that it was no light matter to be out of Christ, and Aliens from the Commonwealth of Israel. After this, they were made to understand something of Christs undertaking for poor lost sinners, and they heard of his exceeding willingness to receive the chiefest of sinners, and that then they began to see an excellency in his love, and goodness, and to be somewhat more taken with the kindness of Christ than ever they were before, and they felt some longings after the precious Jesus, O that they had but a Christ for their Souls! and that after this they were by the Spirit of God, in some measure inabled to cast themselves at the feet of Christ for mercy, and that upon his own terms, knowing that if mercy

came not that way to them, they must sink for ever; and that upon this act of recumbency after they had for some time waited upon God in the way of his ordinances, they began to taste and relish the things of God, and at last they met him whom their Souls loved. Inquire of them, I say, and they will talk thus to you, and tell you also, that there was a time wherein they were foolish, disobedient, and unto every good work Reprobate, and miserably neglectful of their Souls, that they did not at all mind their Eternal welfare, but made light of Christ, made a mock of sin, and made nothing of eternal Damnation. And they will direct, and encourage you also. Let me tell you, they have an interest in God, and their Prayers for you may be more advantagious then you are aware of. Yet I would not that you should make Christs of the Saints, nor forget what is the work of the Mediator alone. Saints are to be valued, but Christ is to be valued infinitely more. Get acquainted with some warm rare experienced Christian, and make him your bosom Friend, and observe him, and you shall see much of the beauty of Religion shining in him, and you shall see how cheerfully, and comfortably he walks; now ask him what his practice is, and go you, and do likewise; have a care of harbouring ill thoughts of the people of God, or for the sake of one Hypocrite, of censuring a thousand sincere Ones. Judg you whether this be just and equal doing? How would you like it, if one that bares some Relation to you should do some vile abominable thing, and bring himself to an untimely end, and people should say all the whole Family is like him? though it

may be you are grieved to the very heart, that such a thing should be don by any in the world, much more by any that bears any kind of Relation to your self. I tell you, as contemptibly as the world speak of the godly, they are not such odious Creatures as they are represented to be. The Saints they are not Troublers, but Peacemakers, they love to make peace between man and man, and what in them lies also between God and man; your converse with such as fear the Lord, will make you like them, at least they will endeavour as much. (*Ar. Epict. l. 3. c. 16.*) He spoke no untruth, who said, *That company is of an assimulating Nature. A living coal laid to a heap of dead ones may kindle them all; but they are more like, except it be blown up, to put the live one quite out*; therefore saith the same Author, *You must be very cautious of your company*. It is storied of *Socrates*, that he had a rare art of making his familiar Friends of his mind. Some active Christians take as much pains to make their familiars of Christs mind. *Prov.* 13. 20. *He that walketh with the wise, shall grow wiser, but a Companion of fools shall be destroyed. Prov.* 10. 20. 21. 32. *The tongue of the just, is as choice Silver, but the heart of the wicked is little worth. The lips of the Righteous feed many, but fools die for want of wisdom. The lips of the Righteous know what is acceptable, but the mouth of the wicked speaketh froward things.* Such as these will do what they can to make you out of love with sin, and in love with God. Such as these will from their own experience be setting forth the goodness of God, and tell you that which may stand you instead as long as you live; it may be they may tell you, that when God began first to work upon their

Soul,

Soul, he was pleased to make use of the particular application, and the spiritual conversation of such a Christian Relation; and when God came in with comfort, and spake peace, such a one lead them to such a promise, which was like a Cordial to their fainting Soul. When they were abroad (they will tell you) and were necessitated to the company of them which were strangers to the life of Religion; and were at such a time troubled with horrible temptations; that they were in a wilderness condition, and thought that never any that walked Heaven-ward, could be in the like state; but now when they got acquainted with the people of God, they found that as face answereth face in a glass, so their experience, and the experience of many of the dear Children of God was exactly alike; and that, that which they thought none in the world could parallel, they find that most of the Christians that they meet with, know as well as themselves, and at the first hearing are able to go on with the story before them, so that they have sometimes wondred how any one living should know their hearts and thoughts so well, to whom they did not communicate them. I think it not altogether impertinent here to insert an observation of my own. I remember when I was once speaking concerning the duty of Christians in Relation to their unconverted Friends, and urging them upon doing what they could for God, and Souls, in the places where God had set them: in speaking to this subject, I said that there was not the meanest Christian, but might be an instrument of the conversion of a Soul: upon this I rehearsed a couple of experiences that I had

of

of two persons, strangers one to the other, who gave this account of their conversion; they were upon the matter both alike, and therefore I shall tell but one of them, which take as follows. There was a poor, civil, yet very carnal Creature, a Servant in a Religious Family, who did from his Soul abhor the Spiritual conversation of those in the Family, insomuch that he was resolved to run away from his service, he was so weary of such doings: But one night, hearing a strange sound somewhere, he rose out of his bed, and went to listen what was the matter; upon which he heard one distinctly praying on the other side of the wall, he still hearkning, heard one praying very earnestly for him (who did not know but he might be asleep) and opening the condition of his Soul so particularly, and with so much tenderness, that he was wonderfully awakened to think that one that he hated should so much love him and pitty his Soul, and to consider how it was possible any one in the world should know his thoughts so well as that person did, who prayed for him; upon this he began to be very much startled to think of his condition, concluding thus, surely I am in a lamentable state, and they see it, or else they would never do as they do, they are praying for me, when I am asleep, they love me when I hate them: upon this the man was very much troubled, and his trouble daily increased, till he was forced to open his condition to the person, who had been praying for him, which was a poor Maid-servant: upon which the work of Regeneration was carryed on very sweetly, and the man became an excellent Christian, whereas the instrument that

God

God used in this great work was but a poor servant. Now when I rehearsed this thing which was the condition of two, as I said before, a third person stood by (whom I never saw in my life before) who fell a sweating for trouble, that any of his Friends should tell such a thing of him, to me, and thought I had meant himself in all the particulars, though I heard not a word of the man before in my life. This by the by, I could not but hint this for the encouragement of parents to get their children into Families that are really Religious, and to encourage all to associate themselves to such as fear the Lord. You see by what hath been spoken, that acquaintance with the people of God, may be of great use for the bringing the Soul acquainted with God.

VII. DIRECTION.

If you would be acquainted with God, entertain all the messengers that he sends to you kindly. When God calls, answer; and when he sends any of his servants to you, bid them welcome; Let the feet of those which bring glad tidings be beautiful in your eye; Do not think much if they deal plainly and roundly with you, know that it is out of love to your Souls (God is their witness) they see that your condition requires it, & that a man in your state is not to be jested with. The Lord knows that they take little pleasure in grieving of people; they do it that you may rejoyce for ever, they watch for your Souls, and therefore you must account them worthy of double honour. But of all the messengers that God sends, have the greatest care of dealing unkindly

kindly with, and grieving his Spirit; when you have any motions upon your Soul by the Spirit, labour to cherish them with all the care and tenderness that you can: Turn not convictions away with, I am not at leisure; or I will hear you of these things when I have a more convenient season: but as soon as you find your heart begin to relent, cry out unto the Lord, and say, O Lord I beseech thee, carry on thy work effectually upon my Soul! O that I may have through work! O let not these convictions wear off from my Soul, till they end in a real conversion! O let me not prove but a halfe Christian! Any thing in the world, Lord, so that I may but be made a Christian in good earnest! O let me not return with the Dog to his vomit, and with the Sow that is washed, to her wallowing in the mire! Deliver me, O God, from running away these things, and getting into a cold world, and from shaking off all, least I prove worse then ever, and my latter end be more miserable then my beginning. Labour to be very curious in the taking notice of Gods absence or presence; and when you find your Soul raised in any duty, and your heart somewhat drawn out after God; then be sure to own Gods goodness, and bless the Lord for it; Record his kindness, forget not his mercy, pass not over such great things in silence. Little do men think what a hazard they run, when they quench the Motions of Gods Spirit. You may read in the 5. *Cant.* How dearly the Spouse had like to have paid for such an unkindness? What, shall God send his Spirit to visit you? Shall the infinite Majesty so far condescend as to knock at your door, and will not you open?

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why then, you may thank your ſelves, if he never knock more. But if you will now open to him, he will come into you, and ſup with you, and you ſhall ſup with him.

VIII. DIRECTION.

Seek his acquaintance moſt earneſtly if you would have it. O why do men and women jeſt with matters of the greateſt weight and importance in the world? What do people mean to play with their ſouls, the wrath of God, and damnation? O ſinners, have you nothing elſe to play with? no lower matters to ſport with? Believe it, Sirs, Heaven and Glory are not got with ſitting ſtill with our hands in our pockets. We think it worth the while to riſe early, and to ſit up late to get an earthly Eſtate; we count it no fooliſh thing for a man to be very diligent about his worldly affairs. The poor Country man plows and ſows, harrows, weeds, reaps, inns, threſheth, and a great deal more, before he can eat his bread: and ſhall we look for a rich crop, and do nothing at all but eat, and drink, and ſleep? Is this the way to be rich? is this the way to be happy for ever? If you intend to do any thing in Religion to any purpoſe, you muſt buckle to your buſineſs at another gueſs rate then moſt of the Profeſſors of the World do. We muſt take as much pains about our ſouls, as men do about their bodies or eſtates. Is there any compariſon between the ſoul and the body; between a worldly eſtate, and an heavenly inheritance? hath a man more reaſon to look after tricking up his body that muſt die, or look after the adorning

adorning of his soul that must live somewhere for ever? Which are matters of the greatest consequence, eating and drinking, and pampering the flesh, and taking our pleasure; or looking after Life, Salvation, and Eternal Joy? Do you think that the Scripture saith in vain, *That we must strive to enter in at the strait gate?* Is it a bare seeking that will serve the turn? Will a *Lord have mercy upon me*, and bowing the knee, do as well as the greatest seriousness and diligence in the world? Do you think that God will be put off with the skin and garbage instead of sacrifice, with the shell instead of the kernel, with chaff instead of the corn? Doth not Christ say, *That many shall seek to enter in, and shall not be able?* O why do not lazy Professours read the Scriptures with trembling? Let all those that are angry with us for putting them upon making Religion their business, and using all diligence *to make their calling and election sure*, Read that one Scripture over again, *Luk.* 13. 24. *Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able, &c.* It was Christ who spoke that word. If we tell you of the danger of a formal Religion, you will soon fall upon us as Enemies to your peace, and those which impose too much strictness upon you: We therefore do here produce our Commission for what we say, or rather we desire you but to read your selves what Christ spoke, as touching this matter. O it might justly make a Christians heart to ake, to think how many thousands of professors will be disowned by Christ in that day, who will make many fair pleas for themselves, and pretend a great deal of acquaintance with him. Considering

beseech

beseech you, here is no fear of excess; never any man in the world that was too sollicitous about his Salvation, never any man took too much pains for heaven. Awake, O sleeper, what meanest thou? arise, and call upon thy God. If you make any thing of the loss of a Soul, look about you; if you think the wrath to come considerable, be serious; if you would not be burnt by the fire of his indignation, you must take hold of his strength, and make peace with him, and God will be at peace with you, *Isa.* 27. 5. It is not without cause, that the Prophet doth complain, *Isa.* 64. 7. *There is none that calls upon thy Name, that stirs up himself to take hold on thee. There is none that calls upon Gods Name!* One would think that that were strange; What none call upon his Name, when so many of them made many Prayers, as you have it in the first of *Isaiah*? What did they nothing but look upon one another, when they had their Solemn Assemblies? Did they say nothing to God, when they came before him? Did they do nothing at all in that 58. of *Isaiah*, when they are said to seek him daily, when they seemed to delight in his way? Yes in in Gods esteem, all this goes for nothing at all, this prayer is no prayer, this is only wording of it with God. But prayer it is another kind of thing, it is the stirring up of the Soul, and awakening all it's strength to wrestle with God, to lay hold upon God, and to prevail with the Almighty; and where are such as these to be found, who is this that engages his heart in the service of God? It is one thing to engage the tongue, and another thing to engage the heart. Men come to pray with a common Spirit, and are many times weary of

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the work before they have well begun it; what they do, they do it heedlesly: They can follow their worldly imployments with life and delight. They have Male in their flock, but that's too good for God; a lame, blind, starved weak thing must serve his turn: and is this the way to have the blessing? Are such as these like to have any thanks for their kindness? Let them try how any of their Friends would take such a present. Now would you have the blessing of acquaintance with God, you must wrestle for it, and not let God go without it: you must be *Fervent in Spirit, serving the Lord*; you must *fight the good fight of Faith, and lay hold on eternal life*: you must grasp about Christ as a man that is a drowning would grasp any thing that were thrown out to save him: you must use *all diligence to make your Calling and Election sure*: you must *work out your Salvation with fear and trembling*: you must *seek for wisdom as for Silver, and search for her as for hid Treasure. Then shall you understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledg of God*. What excellent thing is there, that is got without pains? Whoever came to be an Exquisite curious Artist in any skil whatever, that never served an apprenticeship to it, nor at the least gave his mind to it? where is there a famous Physitian that never studied in his life? Who gets a victory by sleeping and carelessness? Who expects to have riches drop into his mouth, when he goes all the ways that can be to make himself a begger? Doth the Husbandman look for a good Crop without plowing or sowing? Why, then, should we expect such great things as Heaven, Eternal happiness, and the favour of God, with-

out

out looking after them. Whatsoever the lazy formal professor may say, the Kingdom of Heaven is not obtained thus: there must be running, watching, fighting, conquering, holding fast, holding out, and all little enough; it requires all the strength of thy Soul to engage in this great work; it requires some resolution to do such a work, as every Christian must do, or else his Religion signifies little. Further, it calls for some time too it is not a thing to be minded; now and then by the by, between sleep and wake, when the Devil and the World have had as much service as they call for. Were it for your bodies that I were now pleading, were you like to get any great matter in the world by following of my directions; could you be show'd a way how to get a great estate, honours, and long life, I am verily perswaded a few words might prevail much. Why, if you will believe the word of God, I am telling you of other kind of things then these be, greater matters by far; and yet how little are men and women affected? As if we spoke but in jest always, when we spoke about things that did concern Souls! How little time do men spend in their inquiry into these things? Ask *Epictetus* (*Ench. c.* 63.) And he will tell you, that it is a sign of a low Soul; to bestow much time upon thy Body, and the thoughts of it, and little upon the Soul, to be long eating, and long drinking, and long a dressing, and short in prayer, short in the thoughts of the Soul, and short in the service of God; and that it is a sign of a base degenerate Spirit to be very curious about toys, and inconsiderable trifles, and to be negligent about matters of the greatest importance, to slubber o-

yet the great works of Religion with the greateſt ſlightneſs. Remember, O man, thy great work, it is to take care of thy Soul, to look after a Companion, a Friend for thy Soul, to get food and cloathing for thy Soul, that that famiſh not with hunger and cold. To be indifferent in all externals is the greateſt prudence; but to be indifferent about ſpirituals and eternals is the greateſt madneſs. We are all Souldiers, and muſt fight in ſuch a War wherein we muſt never lay down our arms. The favour of God is worth the ſtriving for, it is as much as Heaven and Glory is worth. If your eſtate or life lay at ſtake, would you not be willing to uſe all the intereſt you could to make the Judg your friend? would you go up and down laughing as if you had nothing to do? would you eat and drink as merrily as ever, and ſay, it is but dying, it is but being a beggar, it is but the undoing of my wife and children? would you not look upon a man that ſhould argue at this rate to be little better then frantick? and I pray which is moſt conſiderable, the death of the body, or the death of the Soul; the loſs of a temporal, or the loſs of an eternal inheritance. Moſt mens diligence in Temporals will condemn their negligence in Spirituals. Chriſt ſaid, *Seek ye firſt the Kingdom of Heaven, and the righteouſneſs thereof*, but moſt men ſay, I will ſeek firſt the earth, and the glory thereof; and if God will give me Heaven and happineſs after I have ſerved the Devil and the world as long as I can, I ſhall be contented to have it. No ſuch matter, never expect it, God muſt ſooner ceaſe to be, then to gratifie you in this. Wherefore do you think, did *David* follow his

his work so close? Why did all those Noble worthies in the Church of old take so much pains? Why should they not much stick to venture estates, and lives too? Will you condemn them all as guilty of too much curiosity, and unnecessary preciseness? Do you think that their labour was in vain? Are all those disappointed, who willingly parted with present things for future things? I must tell you, if you expect to sit down with *Abraham*, *Isaac* and *Jacob* in the kingdom of Heaven, you must do as they did. Heaven will not be obtained now upon any lower Terms then then. Your Souls are as precious as their's, and Heaven will be as well worth your minding as theirs, and God will look upon you as well as upon them, if you will value his favour as they did. Never look to have God give you that which you will not thank him for. What do you say after all this? Will you sit down before your work is don? Open thine eyes, and consider what thou hast to do, and then tell me if it be not the greatest folly imaginable to be slight in these affairs. O how can'st thou eat, or drink, or sleep, whilst thou hast such a great work to do which is undon! O give not sleep to thine eyes, nor slumber to thy eyelids, but deliver thy self from the hand of the hunter, and as a bird from the hand of the fowler. *Go to the* Ant *thou sluggard: Consider her wayes, and be wise; which having no guide, overseer, or ruler, provideth her meat in the Summer, and gathereth her meat in the Harvest.* How long wilt thou sleep, O sluggard? when wilt thou arise out of thy sleep? *Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep, so shall thy poverty come; as one that travelleth, and thy want as an armed man.*

And will you now labour to get acquaintance with God, as you would to get food for your body? will you indeavour as much to make sure of this love, as you would do to make sure of a pardon, in case of the Forfeiture of your Life? If so, we have some hopes, the work may have some considerable issue.

IX. DIRECTION.

If you would be acquainted with God, be much in expostulating the case with God, and in urging those arguments which the Scripture doth afford you in such a case. Take with you words, and come unto the Lord, and spread your requests before him, and say,

O Lord, thou hast sent thy servants the Ministers, and hast invited me to come unto thee, and thou offerest peace and reconciliation, and to be acquainted with me. O God, I desire from my soul, to come upon thy call, and would fain be acquainted with thee. I see my self in an undone state, while I am a stranger to thee: but, O Lord, I have a cursed base heart that keeps me back from thee, and I can't tell what in the world to do. O Lord, I beseech thee help thy poor creature to come unto thee, lead me by the hand, let thy goodness and love constrain me, conquer me by thy kindness; come Lord into my soul, and let me see thy face, and look upon thee till I am in love with thee. O why art thou as a stranger to me? wilt thou forsake me for ever? shall I be one of those thine enemies which shall be slain before thy face? shall I be one of those that shall dwell with everlasting burnings? O Lord, pity, pity, pity, for Christ his sake, a poor creature that would fain love thee, and be acquainted with thee. I am convinced that I must be damned without thee, and cannot

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thee of my self I cannot. O draw me! O carry me! O compel me! constrain me, make me willing in the day of thy power: I cannot get loose, my heart is too hard for me, my lusts are too strong for me, my temptations are too many for me to conquer of my self. O Lord help me. Turn me, and I shall be turned. Pluck my feet out of the snare, or I shall be utterly destroyed for ever. Forgive mine iniquity, make me a clean heart, make me thy servant. Tell God that thou hast heard of his goodness and mercy, and that the King of *Israel* is a merciful King; and that it is his nature to pity. Say to him, O I am a poor undone creature, and wilt thou send me away without mercy? will the God of Grace send me away without Grace? hast thou not called me, O God? thy servants tell me so, O Lord speak and give me ears to hear; O Lord I am come in upon thy merciful Proclamation, and I desire to lay my self at thy feet; mercy Lord, mercy upon what tearms thou pleasest. Didst thou not say in thy Word, *Ho every one that thirsteth, come, and buy wine and milk without money, and without price.* Have not thy servants pleaded with me to come? and hast thou not sent for me? O! a blessing, a blessing for me, even for me, O my Father! Hast thou not a blessing for me? shall I be sent away as I came? O Lord, I come at thy word! do not say unto me, Be gone out of my sight. I cannot go, I will not go; whither shall I go from thee? for thou hast the words of Eternal Life. Though I cannot say, Be just to me a Saint, yet I will say, Be merciful to me a sinner. You may read more in *R. M.* his first Part of his *Vindiciæ Pietatis*, pag. 232. the whole Treatise is excellent. Plead the bloud of Christ; you may safely

ſay, that if there be not enough in Chriſt to ſave you, you do not deſire Salvation; for in him there is all fulneſs. You may plead your own abſolute neceſſity. Tell God, that if ever poor creature in the world had need of mercy, you have; tell him that you are reſolved not to be content without his love. You may plead his promiſe, in which he hath ſaid, *That he will take away the heart of ſtone, and give a heart of fleſh; and that he will put his fear in our hearts, and write his laws in our inward parts.* You may plead alſo the power of God, whereby he is able to ſubdue all things unto himſelf; and many ſuch like arguments, you may find in many places in the Scripture. But becauſe I have touched upon this before I ſhall paſs this by.

X. DIRECTION.

If you would be acquainted with God, look after it ſpeedily, defer not a moment, your enemy is marching on apace, you may be ſurprized, your ſoul is haſting upon its eternal ſtate, your glaſs is almoſt run, there are but a few ſands behind; therefore ſeek the Lord while he may be found, and call upon him while he is near: ere long it will be too late; wherefore what thou doeſt, do quickly. What is the voice both of Scripture and Providence? doth not the Word of God ſay *Now*, and commend the preſent time above all. Acquaint *now* thy ſelf with him; Remember *now* thy Creatour; Turn *now* unto the Lord. Let a poor Heathen (*Epict. En. c. 75.*) ſhame you into greater ſpeed in this neceſſary work. I ſhall tranſlate his words into *Engliſh*: *How long*, ſaith he, *will you defer the looking after the beſt*

beſt things? how long will you abuſe your reaſon? Have you not heard ſuch precepts which you ought to agree to, and you ſeemed very well to like of? what kind of Teacher is it that you ſtay for? for whoſe coming do you defer before you will mend and turn? you are come now to years of diſcretion (if I ſhould ſay you were not, you would be angry) if you will neglect and delay, and add one delay to another, if you will add one put off to another, and make one reſolution and purpoſe after another, and ſet one day after another, in which you will think of theſe things; conſider that all this will do you no good, for all your reſolutions and purpoſes, for all that I ſee, you are like to die a common man; therefore *now* live as a perfect growing man, and follow that which is moſt excellent unalterably. If any thing of difficulty intervene, remember that *now* is the time for you to ſhew what reſpect you have for your God and your ſoul. Remember the goal is not far off, and that *now* you muſt not falter, and that as you demean your ſelf *now*, it may be you may be happy or miſerable while you have a being. This is the Language of that excellent Moraliſt. I add, what is it, O ſinner, that thou ſtayeſt for? Is it for the day of Judgment? would you be taught by flames, the worth of time? You may then indeed learn; but believe it, your knowledge and learning will do you little good; you may then learn what it is to be miſerable, but you can't learn how to get out of it; you will know what you have loſt, but then will never know how to repair your loſſes. How many thouſands of them which have ſet a day, in which they would return and repent, have ſet,

and set, and set it again, and what with one thing or other they could not be at leisure to repent till they came to Hell; and there indeed they have leisure enough to repent, and they do repent too, if Hell-repentance would do any thing; I believe that all that come there do repent and believe too more then they did while they were alive; but then it's too late. They that are now in those dreadful Flames, many of them thought, it may be, of repenting before they died as well as you, and did just as you do. O that you would understand your selves before your state be like theirs! how infinitely doth it concern you to improve time, and to comply with the present tenders of mercy that are made to you: for ere long it may be too late for you too. O know this therfore, that *now* thy God makes thee a gracious offer of pardon; and if you refuse *now*, this may be the last time, this may be the very cast for Eternity. God may say before to morrow, *This night thy soul shall be required of thee.* Go to therefore, you that talk of trading for the great things of Eternity, I do not know when, thirty or fourty years hence, Do you not know that your life is but a blast? when your breath goes out of your nostrils, you are not sure that you shall draw it in again. What then do you mean to talk of delay? have you not staid long enough already? consider man what thou dost. He that saith he will be good to morrow, he saith he will be wicked to day. And what if God should say, thou shalt have the pleasure of sin to day, and the sorrow of sin to morrow? Thou shalt be hardned to day, and damned to morrow? If your house were on fire, you would scarce say, I will go and

sleep

ſleep four or five hours, and then I will riſe and call my neighbours to help to quench it. If your child were a drowning, you would ſcarce ſay, I muſt needs ſtay til I have drunk a flaggon or two more, and about half an hour hence it may be I may go and ſee whether I can get a boat to help him out. If you were condemned to dye to morrow, you would ſcarce ſay, I will have Muſick, and Sack, and good Company all night, and then I will ſend a meſſenger if I can get one to ride a hundred mile to try whether he can get a Pardon for me. Yet thus for all the world thou doſt do in the great affairs of thy immortal ſoul. *O the folly of man* (ſaith *Seneca*) *who thinks to begin to live, when a thouſand to one but he will be dead and rotten*! I may ſay, O the madneſs of ſinners, who make account to be looking after Heaven then, when its likely their ſouls may be in Hell! Judge now whether this be wiſdom. Now you think time one of the pooreſt commodities in the world, it's a very drugg which lies upon your hand, a day or two, a week, a year is no great matter with you: but believe it, the caſe will be altered with a witneſs ere long. *Seneca* wondred when he heard ſome asking one of his friends for to ſpend two or three weeks with them, when he ſaw how eaſily the requeſt was granted, as if they asked as little as nothing, when they asked time of him; *Thus* (ſaith he) *one of the preciouſeſt things in the world is thrown away as little worth.* When you come to lie upon your death-bed, we ſhall have you have other thoughts of Time: then, a world, if you had it, for one of thoſe hours, that you could not tell how to ſpend. You now ſtudy how to rob your ſelf of your precious time, you invent

paſtimes,

pastimes, not considering how swiftly time flies, and how much you will prize it before long. O remember no body can give you a moment of that time when you want it, that you are now so prodigal of. When time is past, if you would give a world to recall it, it could not be: if you would give thousands for the renewing of this Lease, it would be refused. Therefore live quickly. Mans time runs away first. *Optima quaque dies miseris mortalibus ævi, prima fugit*—— Seneca. And then my Author Comments very bravely upon the whole verse.

I think that Proverb, though it be an *Italian* one, is worth our remembring, *He that will lodge well at night, must set out betimes in the morning*. That which keeps us from living to day, is the thoughts of living to morrow: so that we lose this day while we expect the next. *Cowenius* speaking of the Tiger, saith, *That when he hears the sound of the Trumpet, he tears and bites himself*. This will be the work of the mercilesse Tigers of the world, that spend their time (in which they should be providing for Eternity) in hunting Gods people, and taking their pleasures; and it may be think to be a little more mild before they die; but of a sudden the Trumpet sounds, away, away, and O then what a lamentable taking are they in! how do they wish for time again, or that they had spent that which they had better? wicked men never know the worth of Time, till they come to a Death-bed, or a while after. O then, they that made nothing of spending thirty or fourty years, would lay down all they are worth for one year, one moneth, one day, one hour, but it's then too late. O how do they gnash their

teeth

teeth! with what horrour do they think of paſt mercies, and future miſeries! Men fear generally that Death will come ſooner then they would have him; they bewail that their lives are ſhort at the longeſt; whereas if men would wiſely huſband that time that God hath given them, it would be long enough: O happy is that man that hath done his great work before his Sun is ſet! O fooliſh men that complain of God for making their lives ſo ſhort, and complain not at all of themſelves for making them ten times ſhorter: for moſt men lives not at all the life of Religion, and may be called Dead. Others have a name to live, and yet are little better then the former. Moſt that live ſpiritually, begin their life after they have been many years dead: and though we ſit and condemn others as guilty of great imprudence in theſe affairs, yet, how do we at the ſame time juſtifie them, by being as profuſely expenſive of precious time as they? O where's the man almoſt to be found, that doth improve time to as good advantage as he ſhould? Among other ſymptomes of a fool, this is none of the leaſt, *To be always beginning to live.* What an unhandſome ſight is it to ſee an old man learning his Letters? O remember man, thou haſt a great work to do! O remember thy precious time runs away with an unſpeakable ſwiftneſs! What do you mean, to ſit with your hands in your boſoms? Look about thee, O ſinner, 'tis not time a day for you to be ſleeping or playing; Methinks a man in your condition ſhould be up and doing with all the diligence that you could for your ſoul, and labouring *to make your calling and election ſure;* methinks we ſhould hear you asking, what you

ſhall

shall do to get a Pardon for your sins; to get God reconciled to you. Methinks you should be enquiring what you should do to redeem your time, and to spend every moment of it so to the best advantage, as that you may appear chearfully before your Master at night. That I may inforce this weighty Direction, I shall propound a few serious Questions to you.

Quest. 1. Do you think that these things are necessary, or are they not? If they be necessary, why do you not mind them speedily? If they be not necessary, do not look after them at all.

Quest. 2. Do you expect to be in a better capacity to look after these things hereafter? do you hope for more strength, when you are worn out with sin and age, when your back begins to bend, and your joynts to shake? Do you think you shall be more at leisure, when your work will be much increased? Know this, that sin grows upon you daily, it preys upon your Vitals: He that is not fit to day, will be less fit to morrow. As for leisure, I must confess you may have leisure enough in another world, to think of these things. But I wish you well to consider whether it be great wisdom to repent in this world, or in another. I would be loath to be repenting in another, it's sad weeping indeed there, where tears shall never be dryed up. I have told you oft that God saith, to day, and it is both wickedly and foolishly don of man to say, to morrow. I must tell you but so, that it is a dreadful hazard that every delaying Sinner doth run: it is a question whether God may not deny his grace, stop the Preachers mouth, stop his ears, and stop your breath: and where are you then, with your to

morrow? Delays in theſe affairs always coſt dear; they have coſt many thouſands dear already, and if you make no more haſt then you have don, they will coſt you dear too.

Queſt. 4. When would you get acquainted with God? when he hath ſhut up his door? when would you run this race? when you have loſt your legs, or can but creep with Crutches? Is that the beſt time to do your work in, when it is next to impoſſible to do it?

Queſt. 4. Who deſerves beſt at your hands, the Devil, the World, and the Fleſh, or God? Reſolve me this I pray? whom do you call your Maſter? whom have you moſt reaſon to make haſt for?

Queſt. 5. How would you take it, if any of them which depend upon you, ſhould ſerve you as you ſerve God?

Queſt. 6. Do you think you can make too much haſt? Who is afraid of being Rich too ſoon? Although a man may with reaſon good enough be afraid of that which may make his happineſs far more uncertain, and his miſeries more intollerable. Who fears to make too much haſt when his Prince ſends for him with ſpeed? O that men did but know, who it is that calls them, and whether they are going, and what they have to do, when they come to theſe journeys end!

Queſt. 7. Are you ſure you ſhall live till you are an hour older? You are ſtrong and healthful ſe may be, but did you never hear that ſuch have with a very little warning? Have you never known a man well one hour, and dead the next? If you have not, I tell you of one now, that was

very

very well one moment, and dead the next, my ſelf being an eye witneſs of it. It's poſſible there may be but one ſmall moment between a ſtrong working healthful man, and a breathleſs Corps.

Queſt. 8. What do you think will become of you, I ask again, if you put off till it be too late?

Queſt. 9. What would you do, if you were ſure you ſhould dye, or the day of Judgement come before you were a week Older?

Queſt. 10. Do you think to get acquainted with God in another world, when you do not mind him here? Will God think you own them hereafter, that diſown him here? Will he know them in Heaven, who would not know him upon the Earth?

XI. DIRECTION.

If you would be acquainted with God, take heed of thoſe things, which keep God and man at a diſtance, and make the Lord take no pleaſure in us. In general, take heed of all ſin, *Waſh you, make you clean, put away the evil of your doings from mine eyes, ceaſe to do evil, learn to do good, ſeek judgement, relieve the oppreſſed, judge the Fatherleſs, and plead the cauſe of the widow. Come now, and let us reaſon together, ſaith the Lord,* Iſa. 1. 17, 18. You muſt waſh your hands in innocency, if you intend to compaſs his Altar, to ſit down at his Table. In *Pſal.* 101. *David* is exceeding deſirous of Gods company, and he cries out, *O when wilt thou come unto me!* he thinks long to have a viſit from his old friend; he would gladly walk with him. Now what courſe doth he take to get God's com-

company? Why, he goes the best way to work in the world: He will set no wicked thing before his eyes. He knows it is to no purpose for him to expect much of Gods company, while he doth entertain his greatest enemies; therefore he turns them out of doors; I hate, saith he, the works of them that turn aside, it shall not cleave to me. And that God may dwell with him, and make his house, as well as his heart, a Temple for himself; he will not suffer a wicked person to live in it, he will have none in his Family, but such as shall be ready to serve God, and bid this his great Friend welcome.

But more particular, if you would have much of Gods company, and be intimately acquainted with him; take heed more especially of those particular sins which make God most to estrange himself from man. As,

First, Take heed of pride: That was the sin which made the first breach between the Creature and the Creator, the sin that sunk the Angels, that made God and them, who were very good Friends once, to be bitter enemies; this hath made the breach infinite, the feud everlasting, the wound incureable. And this made the first quarrel between God and man. When man thinks himself too good to be but a man, he must be a God; he quickly is too bad to be a man, he is but one remove from the Devil. To be a favourite of his Prince is not enough, except he may step into the Throne; it's therefore high time for his Prince to remove such from his presence to a Prison, from the Court to the Dungeon. It was pride that cast *Adam* out of Paradise; and do you think that that sin is less hateful to

God

God, and less dangerous to man then it was five thousand years ago? Did it then spend all it's poison? and can it now do no harm? Do you believe that God will take that into his bosom now, that formerly he abhorred to look upon? Now sin hath increased it's strength and deformity, and heightened it's enmity against the infinite Majesty of the holy *Jehovah*, shall his hatred against it decrease? will he be more willing to accompany proud aspiring Rebells now then then? no such matter, God is still as holy as ever, and hates all sin, especially pride as much as ever. Do you think that it is for nothing that the word of God speaks so much against this sin? Can it be that the Holy-ghost would say, *Prov.* 11. *That every one that is proud, is an abomination to the Lord*, except God did indeed hate them? Why should God threaten such so much, if he took any pleasure in their Society? *though hand joyn in hand, yet the proud shall not go unpunished. Now we call the proud happy, but shall we call him so, when the day of the Lord shall burn as fire, and all the proud shall be as stubble: And the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord, and it shall leave them neither root nor branch. When the Lord shall tread down the wicked, and they shall be like Ashes under his feet*, *Mal.* 3. 15. & 4. 1, 3. There is not one proud man in Heaven, I am sure: nor a proud man upon the Earth, that shall have much of Gods acquaintance. And let me say, he that sets himself above God (for that's the pride I mean) whilest he stands in that state, must never expect that God should look upon him with any kindness. Heaven and Hell will as soon be agreed, as God and such a one shall be united. The

proud

proud now overlook others that are their better, and ſcorn their Maker; but ſhortly they ſhall be paid in their own coyn, they ſhall be ſcorned too. If all the proud *Nimrods*, *Pharaohs* and *Belſhazzars* in the world ſhould enter into a league, and combine againſt the Almighty, and ſay, they will caſt away his cords from them, and that they will never debaſe their noble Spirits ſo low as to ſtoop to his commands; yet none of them all ſhall go unpuniſhed: they ſhall be like ſtubble before the devouring flames, and like chaffe before a mighty whirlwind: God is not afraid o' their big looks, *Prov.* 21. 4. *Prov.* 6. 17. *Prov.* 15. 25. *Iſa.* 2. 12. *Luke* 1. 51. *Jam.* 4. 6. God will cloath himſelf with vengeance, and the mighty *Jehovah* will gird his weapon upon his thigh, and march out in fury and indignation, and draw his glittering ſword, and reſiſt the proud, and teach them what it is to bid defiance to the Lord of Hoſts. We ſhall ſoon ſee, who ſhall be uppermoſt, God or they. And when the proud ſinner lies conquered at his feet, how doth he with infinite ſcorn look upon him, and ſay, behold, the man is become like one of us! This 'tis for man to attempt the dethroning of the Almighty! But it may be, moſt may think themſelves little concerned in that which I now ſpeak; wherefore I muſt add this one word. Be it known unto thee, O man, whoſoever thou art, that think'ſt thou haſt no pride; I am ſure thou art one of thoſe that are in that black roll which have proclaimed war againſt heaven; thou art the man that ſhall never be acquainted with God whilſt thou art in that mind. It may be thou maiſt ſpeak peace to thy ſelf for all this, and

flatter thy self as if God and you were Friends; but let me tell thee, I come with heavy tidings in my mouth to thee: if thou turn not, he will whet his sword, he hath bent his bow, and made it ready, he hath prepared for thee the instruments of death, the day of thy Calamity is near: the dreadful *Jehovah* is upon his march; and if you ask me whether there be not peace for thee, I answer as *Jehu* did to *Jehoram*, what peace, O haughty sinner, so long as the pride of thy heart is so great, and thy Rebellions against thy Maker so many; there is no peace saith my God to the wicked. Wherefore as you value your Soul, as you tender your everlasting Salvation, and desire to be owned by the Lord in the day of your distress, take heed of pride. Go quickly, and humble your self, and make sure your Friend; labour to pull down every high thought, and every proud imagination; and let your Arrogant Spirit bow before the mighty God, there is no way will do but this; as ye have already heard: you must set the Crown upon the Lords head, you must lay your selves at his feet, and lick the very dust. Your betters have don so before you, and have thought it their honor to lye at the feet of Christ; this they look'd upon (as with good reason too) as the first step to preferment. If therefore you would be acquainted with God, take heed of pride.

Secondly, Take heed of a worldly mind. What concord is there between Earth and Heaven? what agreement between God and the World? what delight can his holiness take in him, who had rather be wallowing in the mud and treading of Clay, then bathing himself in

Divine

Divine contemplation; that thinks it highest preferment to sit by his bags of gold, than to stand in the presence of his God: a greater happiness to be rich, than to be Holy; that had much rather be in a Fair, Market or Exchange, getting money, than with his God, getting Pardon, Grace and Heaven. How pregnant is the Scripture of proofs for the evidencing of this truth? to name one or two of a hundred, *Rom. 8. 7. The carnally minded is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the Law of God, neither indeed can it be.* What do you say to this Scripture? Those which walk with God, live in the world, and yet they live above the world; they all look for a City that hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. It was not for nothing that the Apostle *John* lays so strict a charge upon those which he wrote to, *That they should not love the world, nor the things of the world: for if any love the world, the love of the Father is not in them, 1 John 2. 15.* Whence is it that so few great ones go to heaven, and that it is next to impossible for such to be saved? Is it not because they have chosen *Mammon* for their Friend, rather then God? He hath their heart, their love, their time and service, and they have little to spare for God, and therefore God hath but a little happiness, a little heaven, a short glory for them, they shall have but a little of his sweet company, little acquaintance with him. Why doth *James* speak so terribly to the rich men, and bid them go, and weep and howl? was it not because their riches were like to undo them? Did the wealthy man in the Parable live ever the longer for his riches, or fare ever the better for his greatness, when he came into another world? there is no

ruption, but he might have more flatterers; their he is no doubt, but he had more worldly friends; but bring me a man upon the Earth, that lets his heart without controle fly upon the world, cleaves to it, and takes it to be his best friend, that knows God, that's acquainted with his Maker, that prizeth his Redeemer. It was a wise man, who said, that it's absolutely impossible to mind externalls and internalls, this world and another, with earnestness at the same time: but it was wisdom it self who said, *That no Servant can serve two Masters; for either he will hate the one, and love the other, or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other; ye cannot serve God and Mammon, Mat.* 15. 24. &c.

3. Take heed of Hypocrisie. Who are the persons that God doth denounce his dreadful threatnings against? are they not such as honour him with their lips, when their heart is far from him? with what abhorrency doth he look upon such, and all that they do? *Isa.* 1. They never bring their heart to visit God with, and therefore they have little reason to expect that he should bring his Dainties to entertain them with.

4. If you would be acquainted with God, take heed of being acquainted with wicked company. We read that many wicked men have fared the better for the company of the godly; but we scarce ever heard that any godly man ever fared the better for being in the company of the wicked, except they went on Gods errand among them. This is clear in the case of *Lot*, who first lost his goods, and was made a captive by being in *Sodom*; and though they were restored to him

again

again for a while; some would have thought that should have been a fair warning how he came again into such company; yet because that would not do, a while after you may read how dear *Lot* paid for dwelling in *Sodom*. Poor man! he lost all that he had, and was fain to fly away without either Flocks or Herds, and little more then his clothes on his back, and that which was more sad to leave some of his own dear Relations behind him, roasting in those dismal Flames. Whereas had he never come to *Sodom*, or upon the sight of their wickedness speedily left them, it had been much better with him in many respects. *Jehoshaphat* fared never the better for joyning in affinity with his wicked neighbours, he had like to have cost him his life. But were it only loss of temporals that a man hazarded by such society, the danger were not so considerable, but the peril is greater then so, for by it they make God stand at a distance; they must never look to have such company, and Gods company both together; I mean, when they do unnecessarily or delightfully converse with such. If therefore you intend to be acquainted with God, you must not have them always in your company whom he hates, and which hate him, and will labour all they can to cool your affections towards him. Wherefore, be ye not unequally yoaked with unbelievers; for, what fellowship hath unrighteousness with righteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? and what concord hath Christ with *Belial*? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? and what agreement hath the Temple of God with Idols? for ye are the Temple of the living God,

as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people, wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you, and I will be a father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty, 2 Cor. 6. 14 to the end. But I would not here be mistaken, as if I would commend an ungodly proud separation from all that are not just of our mind; or as if a man ought to have nothing at all to do with wicked men; no, no, every one ought to do what he can in his place for the good of souls. O that Christians would thus converse more with their poor, ignorant, carnal, Christless neighbours! O that they would thus be more acquainted with the wicked, and then they should have never the less of Gods company, but the more; but it is an unnecessary delightful associating of our selves with them that I mean, especially such of them which will stifle every spiritual Discourse, and divert you from any thing that tends to the promoting of the interest of Religion; and such as have frequently expressed their detestation of the way of Holiness, and make but a mock at your serious Counsels, stop their ears to wholsome Advice, or make some undecent reflections upon the strict profession of godliness; such as labour to make you believe that all Religion, but that which will consist with their wickedness, is but a Phansie. As for such as those, abhor their company, fly from them as those that have the plague, the marks of death are upon them, and your coming near them will be upon their doom, but go not in that you be infected.

5. If you would be acquainted with God, take heed of unbelief. Unbelief will make your soul depart from God, and God quite to depart from your soul. This, this is one of those dreadful and God-estranging sins, which leads on whole Legions against the Almighty. This is that bold daring sin which gives Truth it self the lye, and saith, That the Word of God is false, his Promises airy, his Threatnings but a wind: but know this, O sinner, such a wind they be, that will rise to a dreadful storm, and turn your strong confidences up by the roots, and blow them into Hell, if you make no more of them then you do.

6. If you would be acquainted with God, beware of sensuality. To be sensual and devillish are near akin. To be lovers of pleasures and haters of God, are usually concomitants; in a word, to fare deliciously every day, and to be despised of God, are no strange things. But I wave the further prosecution of these things, because they are so largely and excellently handled already by so many of our brave Worthies. See Mr. *Baxters Saints Rest*, and *R. A.* his *Vindiciæ Pietatis*.

XII. DIRECTION.

If you would be acquainted with God, resolvedly and freely give up your self to him, and enter into a most solemn Covenant with him. And here I shall make bold with that Reverend Author which *R. A.* doth mention in his *Vindiciæ Pietatis*, and present you again with that excellent Form with the Preparatories to it, which I have lately met with in the forementioned Au-

thor. After your most serious addresses to God, and after a deliberate consideration of the tearms of this Covenant; and after a thorow search of your own heart, whether you either have already, or can now freely make such a closure with God in Christ, as you have been exhorted to; and when you have composed your spirits into the most serious frame possible, suitable to a transaction of so high a nature, Lay hold upon the Covenant, and rely upon his Promise of giving grace and strength, whereby you may be enabled to perform your promise. Resolve in the next place to be faithful, having engaged your hearts, and opened your mouths, and subscribed with your hands to the Lord; resolve in his strength never to go back. And being thus prepared, and some convenient time being set apart for the purpose, set upon the work, and in the most solemn manner possible, as if the Lord were visibly present before your eyes; fall down on your knees, and spreading forth your hands towards heaven, open your hearts to the Lord in these or the like words.

O most dreadful God; for the passion of thy Son, I beseech thee accept of thy poor Prodigal, now prostrating himself at thy door; I have fallen from thee by mine iniquity, and am by nature a Son of Death, and a thousand fold more the child of Hell by my wicked practise; but of thine infinite grace thou hast promised mercy to me in Christ, if I will but turn to thee with all

my

my heart: therefore upon the call of the Gospel I am now come in, and throwing down my weapons, submit my self to thy mercy. And because thou requirest as the Condition of my Peace with thee, that I should put away mine Idols, and be at defiance with all thine enemies, which I acknowledge I have wickedly sided with against thee; I hear from the bottom of mine heart renounce them all, freely covenanting with thee, not to allow my self in any known sin, but conscientiously to use all the means that I know thou hast prescribed for the death and utter destruction of all my corruptions; and whereas I have formerly inordinately and idolatrously let out my affections upon the world, I do here resign my heart to thee that madest it; humbly protesting before thy glorious Majesty, that it is the firm Resolution of my heart, and that I do unfeignedly desire grace from thee, that when thou shalt call me hereunto, I may practice this my Resolution, through thy assistance, to forsake all that is dear unto me in this world, rather then to turn from thee to the ways of sin; and that I will watch against all its temptations, whether of prosperity or adversity, lest they should withdraw my heart from thee; beseeching thee also to help me against the temptations of Satan, to whose suggestions,

ons, I resolve, by thy grace never to yield my self a servant. And because mine own righteousness is but menstruous rags, I renounce all confidence therein, and acknowledge that I am of my self a hopeless, helpless, undone creature, without righteousness or strength. And for as much as thou hast of thy bottomless mercy offered most graciously to me wretched sinner, to be again my God through Christ, if I would accept of thee; I call Heaven and Earth to record this day, that I do here solemnly avouch thee for the Lord my God, and with all possible veneration, bowing the neck of my soul under the feet of thy most Sacred Majesty, I do here take thee the Lord Jehovah, *Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, for my portion, and chief good, and do give up my self, body, and soul for thy servant; promising and vowing to serve thee in holiness and righteousness all the days of my life.*

And since thou hast appointed the Lord Jesus Christ, the onely means of coming unto thee, I do here upon the bended knees of my soul, accept of him as the only new and living way, by which sinners may have access to thee; and do here solemnly joyn my self in a marriage Covenant to him.

O blessed Jesus, I come to thee hungry and hardly bestead, poor, and wretched, and miserable,

ſerable, and blind, and naked, a moſt loath-ſome polluted wretch, a guilty condemned ma-lefactor, unworthy for ever to waſh the feet of the ſervants of my Lord, much more to be ſolemnly married to the King of Glory? But ſince ſuch is thine unparalell'd love, I do here with all my power accept thee for my Head and Husband, for better for worſe, for richer for poorer, for all times and con-ditions, to have, and honour, and obey thee before all others, and this to the death. I embrace thee in all thy Offices, I renounce mine own worthineſs, and do here avow thee to be the Lord my righteouſneſs, I re-nounce mine own wiſdom, and do here take thee for mine only guide, I renounce mine own will, and take thy will for my Law.

And ſince thou haſt told me that I muſt ſuffer if I will reign, I do here covenant with thee, to take my lot as it falls with thee, and by thy Grace aſſiſting, to run all hazards with thee, verily ſuppoſing, that neither life nor death ſhall part between thee and me.

And becauſe thou haſt been pleaſed to give me thy holy Law, as the rule of my life, and the way in which I ſhould walk to thy Kingdom; I do here willingly put my neck under thy yoke, and ſet my ſhoulders to thy burden, and ſubſcribing to all thy Laws,

as holy, just and good; I solemnly take thee to the rule of my words, thoughts and actions: promising, that though my flesh contradict and rebel, yet I will endeavour to order and govern my whole life according to thy Direction, and will not allow my self in the neglect of any thing that I know to be my duty.

Only because through the frailty of my flesh, I am subject to many failings, I am bold humbly to protest, that unallowed miscarriages contrary to the setled bent and resolution of my heart, shall not make void this Covenant, for so thou hast said.

Now Almighty God, searcher of hearts, thou knowest that I make this Covenant with thee this day, without any known guile or reservation, beseeching thee, that if thou espiest any flaw or falshood herein, thou wouldest discover it to me, and help me to do it aright.

And now glory be to thee, O God the Father, whom I shall be bold from this day forward, to look upon thee as my God and Father, That ever thou shouldest find out such a way for the recovery of undone sinners. Glory be to thee, O God the Son, who hast loved me, and washed me from my sins in thine own blood, and art now become my Saviour and Redeemer. Glory be to thee, O

 God

God the Holy Ghost, who by the finger of thine Almighty power hast turned about my heart from sin to God.

O dreadful Jehovah, *the Lord God omnipotent, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, thou art now become my Covenant-Friend, and I through thine infinite Grace, am become thy Covenant-Servant.* Amen. So be it. *And the Covenant which I have made on Earth, let it be ratified in Heaven.*

The Conclusion.

AND now my work is done, I must leave you; and whether I shall ever speak to you, or see you, or write to you again while the world stands, I know not: my body is frail, and I am a poor dying man, and before it be long my mouth will be more stopped then it is, and yours too: and therefore it's high time for us to look about us. As for my part I have with all the seriousness that I could for my soul, spoke to you about the great and weighty affairs of your souls and Eternity. I again call Heaven and Earth to witness, that I have set Life and Death before you; I have in the name of my great Master been woing of you to accept of his Son for your Lord and Husband; himself for your God, Father and Friend. I have told you what the Lord doth require of them that would be in Covenant with him. I have given you a rude description of him whom I would have you acquainted with.

with. I have told you of some of the glorious effects of acquaintance with God. I have told you of the danger of being a stranger to God. I have told you how thankfully some have closed with these offers, and how well they like their choice. I have further shew'd you what a peaceable state you shall be in, immediately upon your Spiritual Alliance with this great and noble friend. I have told you also of some further benefit and good that will come unto you upon your acquaintance with God. I have given you to understand how desirous the Lord is notwithstanding all that is past, to forget and forgive, and to receive you into favour, if you will in good earnest return to him with speed. I have again and again propounded this match to you, and told you as much as I could well do in so short a time. I have staid a great while for an answer. I have put the business forward all that possibly I could; because I see how foolishly and madly you make light of those advantageous offers, that are made to you. I have again and again pleaded with you, as if I were ready to starve, and begging an alms of you; nay, if it had been for my very life, I could not have spoke with more earnestness. I have expostulated the case with you, and asked you several weighty questions, and you have not, you cannot answer any one of them, but you must condemn your self, and by your own confession, you have nothing in the world to say against the excellency of this friend. And therefore you must either speedily come in, upon the invitation, and close with those gracious overtures that are made to you, or you must without any reason in the world (your self being

Judg)

Judg) cast your self away. And in hopes that all that have heard me, will not be so mad as to make light of these things, but be asking with some seriousness, that great question? How shall I do to get acquainted with God, How shall I do to get a Friend for my Soul? what shall I do to be saved? I have laid down some directions for those that are unfeignedly desirous to be reconciled to God, I have told them that they must labour to be thorowly acquainted with that strangeness, and enmity that is in their hearts against God; and of the unspeakable danger of their being strangers to God. I have further directed them that would be acquainted with God to labour to get humble hearts. I have advised that they visit him often, if they would be intimately acquainted with him; & that not in a transitory way, but to make a Solemn set visit of it, and to be sure that they do not forget to get Christ along with them. I counselled them also to be much in those places where he is wont to walk; and to get intimately acquainted with some of them that know him very well, and will do their best to get them to be acquainted with him. I have told you, that if you would be acquainted with God, you must kindly entertain, and make much of any messengers that come from him to you; and if men would make sure work, I desired them as they loved their Souls that they would follow this great business with the greatest earnestness and seriousness in the world: and that, what they do, they would do speedily. I informed you what arguments the Scripture puts into our mouths, which we may urge, at the Throne of Grace. I intreated you for your Souls

sake

ſake to take heed of thoſe things which kept God and man unacquainted; as namely, all ſin in general, but more particularly, pride, worldlimindedneſs, hypocriſie, delight in wicked company, unbelief, and ſenſuality. Laſtly, I direct all ſuch as would be at peace with God to give up themſelves to him reſolvedly and freely, in a Solemn Covenant.

And have I been beating the Air all this while? what will you do after all this? what ſhall become of all theſe Sermons? dare any of you all ſtill be contented to be unacquainted with God? can you be very well ſatisfied, after you have heard of ſuch a Friend, to be a ſtranger to him? can any of you look upon your ſtate as ſafe, while God is your enemy? O how ſhall I leave you, with hearts full of enmity, againſt your Maker! Alas, alas, poor hearts! you look very merrily as bad a condition as you are in, but did you but know how neer you are to everlaſting burnings, I believe it would put a damp upon your Spirits, and ſpoil your mirth. O how ſhall I leave that poor ſinner, that ſtands as a perſon altogether unconcerned! whereas death ſtands ready for his commiſſion, to fetch him away before God; and where are you then? O where are you then, if you come before God as a ſtranger? O what ſhall I do for thee? what ſhall I ſay to thee, to prevail with thee! O what arguments will perſwade thee! O how ſhall we part! Brethren, my hearts deſire is that you may all be ſaved, O that you may all know in this your day, the things of your peace! O that I could mingle all my words with tears! O pitty, pitty, for the Lords ſake, pitty your precious Souls!

Souls? O come not here to ask counsel of God, and then go away, and take the counsel of the Devil? And what will you yet make light of all the tenders of the Gospel? Is Peace, Pardon, Reconciliation, and Acquaintance with God, still nothing with you? Will you for all this take up with a lifeless Religion, and never mind a more Spiritual intimate converse with God? As the Lord liveth, thou speakest that word against the life of thy Soul. But if thou wilt go on, and despise God, who can help it? I have told you, and told you again, what the end of these things will be. Well once more, I ask thee in the name of God, wilt thou have God for thy Friend or no? That is, wilt thou love him above all the world? wilt thou accept him for thy Lord and husband? Wilt thou be ruled absolutely by him? Wilt thou lay down thy weapons, and turn on Gods side, and fight under his Banner? Wilt thou have holiness here, and happiness hereafter? One would think, this is a question, that one need not be long a resolving. Come, come away for the Lords sake; for your precious Souls sake, as you would be owned at the day of judgement; as you would rejoyce when most of the world shall be filled with unspeakable horror, and perplexity; as you would not hear that heart rending word from the mouth of the judge, *Depart, I know you not*, come away, I beseech you! Come away! O ye my dear Friends, the cloud hangs over the world, and ere long it will fall with a vengeance. O come out of *Sodom*, linger not for the Lords sake, least the dint of that storm fall upon you. Fire! Fire! Fire! awake! awake!

awake! The fire is kindled. What meanest thou, O sinner? if thou sleepest a little longer in that bed of security, thou art a dead man; thou wilt be awakened with horror, when thou shalt know thy danger, but not know how to avoid it. And do you still stay? Make haste! O make haste, your glass is almost out, your time almost spent, and death is hastning apace upon you: I speak it again, make haste, come away, I can, I can't hold my peace. How can I indure to see the ruin of thy Soul, and say nothing? O follow those directions which I have given thee out of the Scripture! Seek the Lord while he may be found, and with all possible speed, fervousness, and gratitude, accept of his kindness while you may. Methinks some of your hearts seem to be affected; methinks your countenances speaks you to have some thoughts of returning; some of you look like persons almost resolved to set upon this great work. O that it may not be almost, but altogether! Speak in such Language as this to your own Souls. What meanest thou, O my Soul, thus to stand disputing? Is this a time for thee to stand still, as if thou hadst nothing to do? Hark, how the King of Glory calls! Hear how his messengers invite you! Consider how long they have stood waiting for thee! And shall they go away without thee? O foolish heart and unwise; wilt thou answer all these gracious offers with a flat denial? or that which is little better, wilt thou put off all Gods Messengers with some sorry excuses? Awake, O my soul, and look about thee! how canst thou refuse when mercy calls?

calls? how canst thou deny when kindness it self asks, intreats, beseecheth thee? Awake for shame, up and put on thy wedding garments! O that this mind might be in you always! O that thou were up and ready! And then happy were the day wherein thou wert born; then happy were the day that ever you heard of a Christ, of acquaintance with God, and reconciliation with your Maker. O then how glorious shouldest thou be for ever! I rejoyce to see the day of thy marriage a coming; when thy Lord and Husband shall bring thee home in the greatest state, and in infinite glory to his own house, where thou shalt sit like a Queen for ever and ever. Behold his Harbingers are coming! Behold how many Messengers the Lord hath sent to prepare his way! Awake, O *Zion*, and put on thy beautiful garments! rise up, O Royal Bride, and put on thy Princely Robes! cloath thee with the Son, and put the Moon under thy feet. Go out and meet the King thy Husband. Behold, O *Jacob*, the Waggons of *Joseph* are coming! Behold, O Daughter of *Zion*, the Chariots, the Chariots of thy King and Husband are a coming! they are a coming! O why doth not thy heart leap within thee! O why do not thy spirits even faint for gladness! Why dost thou not say it is enough, I will go out and meet my Lord before I die? When will the Sun be up! When will the day break! When, O when will the shadows fly away! I will get me up to the mountains of Myrrhe, to the Hills of Frankincense. I am travelling for *Zion*, my face is towards *Jerusalem*; who will ascend the holy Hill with me? who

will bare me company to my Husbands House? Let us go up to the Lords house; come away, the Sun is risen, the shadows are flying away, thousands are gone already. Let *Barzillai* and *Chimham*, old and young too, go along with the King to *Jerusalem*. Come from the Highways and Hedges, come with your wedding garments, come quickly and he will make you welcome. The King hath sent to invite us to a feast, a feast of fat things, of Wines on the Lees well refined. Come, for the Table is spread, all things are ready, and his servants stay for us. And will God entertain such Creatures as we are! And will the Lord open his doors to such loathsome beggars? will the Father receive such Prodigals! Return then unto thy rest, O my Soul, for the Lord will deal bountifully with thee. Who is that which I see coming in the field? who is this that comes from the wilderness? that comes to meet us? Hark! methinks I hear the Trumpet sounding: hark! what's the matter! how do the mountains eccho! how doth the air ring again! what noise is that which I hear! what glorious train is that which I see! whence do they come, and whither do they go? It is my Masters Son (dear Soul) thy Lord and Husband with his Royal Attendants. Behold he comes! he comes apace! leaping upon the Hills, skipping upon the mountains. He is coming! he is coming! he is even at the door! Ere long thou shalt see the mountains covered with Chariots and Horses of Fire; the earth will tremble and shake; the Heavens and the Earth will be all on a Flaming Fire; the King of Glory

will

will come, riding upon the wings of the wind, accompanied with millions of his Saints and Angels: He is coming, he is at the door. Go vail thy face; alight and meet thy husband. He will bring thee into his Fathers palace, and thou shalt be his wife, and he will love thee for ever: and thou shalt remember thy widowhood no more. *Even so, come Lord Jesus, come quickly.* Amen. Amen.

FINIS.
